

THE GREEN TEA CENTER

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Storm Clouds

The world looks so different
When there are tears in your eyes
All the colors are the same
But they appear as in a kaleidoscope
Just like the confusion of our lives
When storm clouds rise overhead
And tease you, as the rain never falls
Like my emotions
When lightning strikes the heart.

Jodi Paterno

Candice Klingerman

A silent killer sweeps the nation.
This epidemic frightens me.
I know there's nothing I can do.
This thing grows within me.

I'm scared, mommy, please protect me.
The doctors say I'll die.
All I can do is sit and wait,
And my family sees me cry.

My boyfriend's left me,
My friends are all gone,
The chemo isn't working,
I know I won't be around for long.

I never asked for any of this.
I've always been a good girl.
The radiation's hurting me,
As a tear drips down my curl.

I think what they'll do when I am gone.
I wonder if they'll miss me.
I was never given a chance to live.
It was passed on through my family.

I've always believed in having choices.
Why wasn't I given one?
All I want is to grow up, mommy,
To raise a family and have a son.

I promise God, just let me live,
I'll do anything you say.
Being brave and strong is getting harder.
I'm struggling to breathe today.

Just please God, talk to my mommy.
She'll tell you how good I've been.
I don't deserve this pain and suffering.
Nor does any other kid.

I have no hair. I'm very cold.
My body's begun to shiver.
My pulse is dropping very quick.
I believe it's due to my liver.

I'm starting to convulse now.
My body's full of sweat.
I believe my angel's watching me.
Although we've never met.

So please, God, just let me live.
I'll go to college and get a degree.
I'll be doctor and preach your words.
So I can help people that are just like me



Sean Dallas

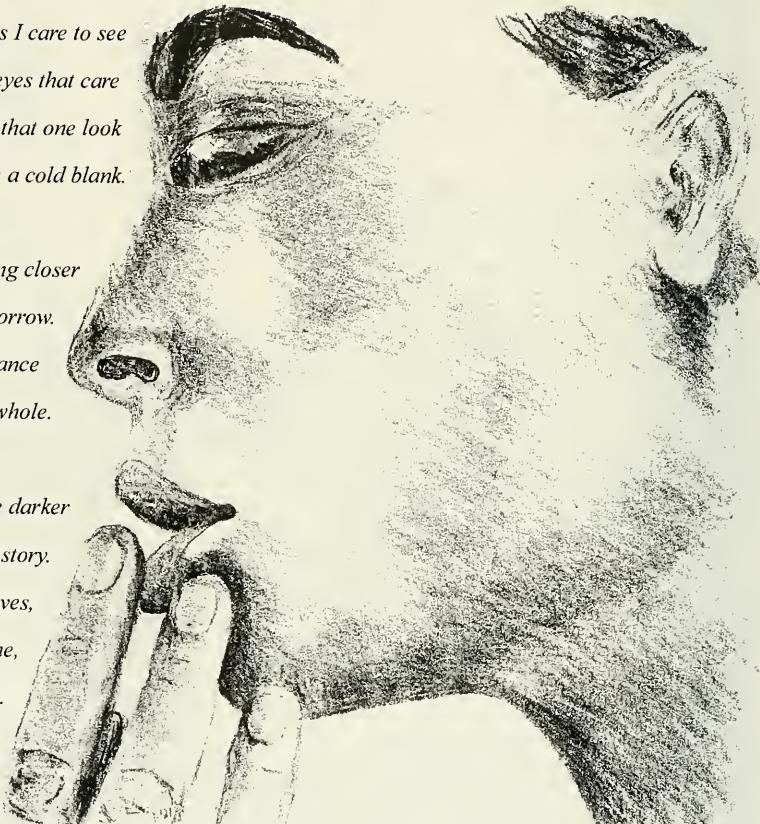
THE EYES HAVE IT

*The eyes I care to see
Are not the eyes that care
My hearts reach for that one look
The eyes stare a cold blank.*

*The why is coming closer
She's leaving my tomorrow.
Slamming my one chance
At making my half whole.*

*Alone, the streets are darker
Graffiti paints another story.
And as the sky relieves,
My city knows not of me,
But of a man of tears.*

*My speakers cannot tell me.
My tv tells me lies.
My love has left me now.
And my thought of her blue eyes.*



*Picture by
Kristen Haver*

Kindred Spirits

Robin M. Goldblum

May 14, 1879

He couldn't take his eyes off her. The party whirled around him, drunken people occasionally bumping against him or shouting some nonsense in his ear. Yet, his attention was solely focused upon her. He studied her finely-chiseled features, her flaming red hair, and her well-proportioned body. In the sunny atmosphere of Georgia, her pale, alabaster skin gave her an exotic appearance when compared to the tanned skin of most of the other women at the party.

She caught his eye again and gave a small smile. He could not tell if the smile was meant for him or the gentleman of the house, whom she was conversing with. He had her hand trapped within his own. With the smile still on her face, she turned and looked directly at him. It did not appear that she had made a sound, but he released her hand and walked away. She began to make her way across the room.

He knew she was coming for him and the breath caught in his throat. As she drew closer, the band ceased playing and the crowd's attention was drawn to the lady of the house. She was ready to make a speech on behalf of her husband, whose birthday was the reason for such an extravagant party. The red haired woman paid no attention, and she stopped dangerously close to the young man.

"I want to show you something," was all she said and led him outside.

The night was warm, but not nearly as stuffy as a ballroom full of excited people. A guard stood at the back entrance to make sure nobody would go in or out that way. Without a word, she sent him inside. The man glanced at the stars as the woman led him to the private gazebo and wondered what was in store for him.

"I'm sorry I was staring at--,"

Her lips cut off the rest of his sentence as she kissed him. An electrical tingle seemed

to course through his body. He'd never done anything this risqué with a woman whose name he didn't even know. He wrapped his arms around her waist and pulled her closer to him. As her kisses became hungrier, she broke from his lips and moved to his neck.

He wondered how far she would go out in public and what would happen if anyone ever found them. She had to be the daughter, or even the wife, of someone very important to be at this party. Besides, the guard saw them leave together out the back way. He could get in a lot of trouble for this.

These thoughts vanished as her teeth, now sharp fangs, entered his neck and pierced the jugular vein. Ripples of pain shot across his neck, and he tried to push away from her. Unfortunately, her grip was stronger than he imagined and he could not move. Soon, the pain started to fade and was replaced by a glowing, euphoric feeling. He felt so relaxed. As the stars faded from his sight, he sighed contentedly and slipped into darkness.

February 26, 1993

She cursed herself again as snow slipped down her boot to make her sock cold and wet. How could she lock her keys in her car? After studying all night in the library for her biochemistry final the next morning, her brain must not have been fully operational. Even worse, the library closed, the parking lot phone was busted, and security was all the way across campus. She hadn't even noticed that it had started snowing earlier in the evening until it was too late.

On the small college campus in northern Wisconsin, not a soul ventured out into the cold night. The woman could hear some faint music coming from the direction of the freshman dorms but there were no other signs of life. As a commuter student living at home, she did not have access to the dorm buildings and the classroom buildings were locked up. Security was her only option.

Off in the distance, she heard the howls from a pack of wolves. It didn't frighten her. Before her sister had left for college in Michigan, they would sit on their porch with mugs of hot cocoa and listen to the sweet night songs. No matter how close they seemed, they never came close enough for her to see the wolves. These howls did seem pretty close but she was not concerned. The animals were frightened of the lights and buildings that surrounded her.

The snow became thicker and a good inch had accumulated on the ground. She could just barely see the lights from security across the large, main parking lot. The howls grew louder, and she began to get nervous. It sounded like the pack was at the edge of the forest that ringed the parking lot. She started to run.

As she neared the building, her foot caught on a snow-covered crack in the pavement and she fell flat on her stomach, her ankle twisted. The howls went silent and she prayed that they had moved off. She turned over to pick herself up and froze. Standing five feet in front of her was a huge, gray-brown wolf. She had never seen a wolf so big, not in pictures or at the zoo. Snowflakes stuck to its coat and face, and a tattered piece of cloth hung from its front leg.

For a moment, she thought the thing would run back into the forest. It didn't. It leapt on top of her, its weight crushing her beneath it. She felt teeth sink through the coat and into the arm that she had instinctively flung up to protect her face. Her screams mingled with its growls as it pawed and bit her. Behind her, she heard shouts and other noises as people from security rushed out to help her. The beast, realizing what was coming, released her arm and ran across the parking lot and into the trees, leaving her there bleeding.

September 1, 2000

He told himself that this would be the last time he played the game. He'd told himself the same thing before but he'd never heeded his own advice. The game was his own

design and it thrilled him, making his cold heart beat again. This would be the last though, he thought once more.

After the red-haired beauty had made him what he was with her dark kiss, he spent many years learning from her and loving her. Yet, as happy as he'd been, she's grown bored with his excited manner and abandoned him on the cold streets of Poland. In desperation, he'd shed his given name and adopted the new name of Stefan, a name he saw as both powerful and sensual.

The memories moved slowly around his head as he watched the player of his latest game. He'd been watching her for about two weeks, mapping out her normal routine. Like his past players, she isolated herself from the world, only interacting with people when necessary. Although she tried to hide them, he had a feeling her loneliness was connected to the ugly scars on her arm. The dull blue waitressing uniform she wore allowed him the occasional glimpse. Her nametag simply spelled out ANN.

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Tonight he would make his move. Her shift at the all-night diner ended at 3:00am and then she would go straight home to her little townhouse. No friends, no family, no roommates. Not a soul would disturb them since the townhouses on either side of hers were vacant and falling into disrepair. He followed her at a safe distance as she left the restaurant. At her home, he watched as the lights downstairs were extinguished in favor of the lights upstairs. Once the place was completely dark, he slipped inside.

Silently, he moved into her bedroom. Locks and security systems had not been a problem for him in over a century. She looked so frail hiding under the covers, her scarred arm exposed. He sat down on the edge of the bed and gently touched her forehead.

"Ann. Ann, I love you," he whispered, stroking her hair. Her eyes flew open but did not focus. She was trapped in his spell. "You have been so alone but I am here to

comfort you in your final moments." He kissed her lips and then moved to drink the sweet life from her throat.

* * * *

This was his favorite part of the game. Not nearly as exciting as what transpired the previous night but the most satisfying. He wanted to know if anyone truly cared for Ann as much as he had. He sat in a booth at the all-night diner, half a piece of apple pie in front of him and the other half shoved in his napkin. Ann's shift was scheduled to start soon and he was waiting to see if any of her co-workers would be concerned over her absence. The jingle of the bells on the door caught his attention.

Impossible! Ann walked past him to the employee door. Her skin was slightly pale and she had a band-aid over her neck but otherwise she was fine. He couldn't believe it! He'd drained her dry, felt her heart stop beating.

Could he have given her eternal life by accident? He'd only done it once before, and there had been disastrous consequences. No, he would never attempt that again. Besides, if she were a vampire like him she would not be able to have the donut he watched her eat, only blood. He had to find out what was going on!

He waited until the night of the full moon because he knew she would have that night off. The townhouse was silent and dark but she had not left. After a thorough investigation, the only place she could have been was the basement. The wooden steps creaked loudly as he descended. The main part of the basement was used for storage. Big, cardboard boxes lined the floor and newspapers were stacked in the corner. A light from a side door caught his attention.

The lock did nothing to stop, and the door opened to reveal something he did not expect. It was a huge cage, metal bars built into the concrete. She sat alone in the center, her eyes closed. One small window outside the cage displayed the stars but not the moon. It had not fully risen yet.

She suddenly realized he was there and whirled toward him, pressing herself against the bars. She was apparently locked in.

"What are you doing here?" she screamed.

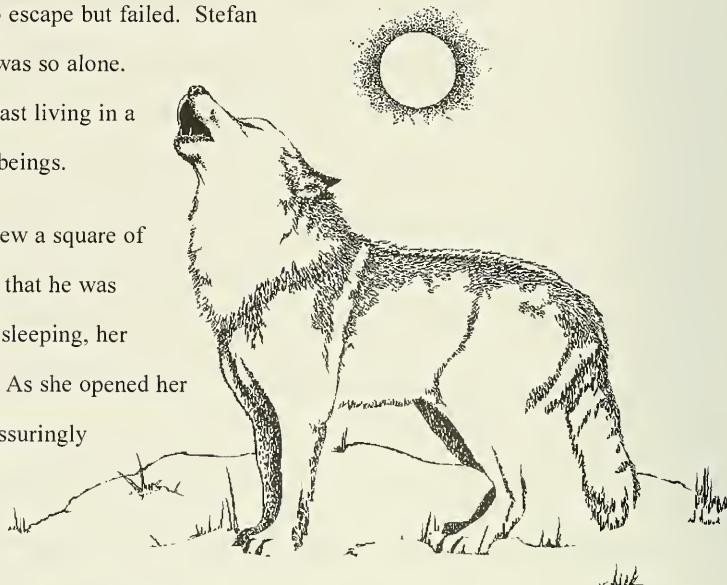
He didn't know what to say. "I'm...um...sorry..."

"Get out!" she screamed. Her breathing grew labored as the room brightened from the rising moon. He watched in shock as her eyes changed from brown to golden and her teeth became pointed. For a moment he thought that he had made her a vampire. Then she reached through the bars and he saw her fingernails turn to sharp claws and hair sprouted from her skin. She hunched over and her clothing ripped loudly to accommodate her changing body.

In less than a minute, a growling wolf occupied the cage. Stefan had never seen a werewolf, never even knew they existed. For hours he stayed and watched her pace the width of the cage, growling often in his direction. Twice she tried to use her strength to escape but failed. Stefan now understood why she was so alone.

Like him, she was an outcast living in a world of civilized human beings.

The morning sun threw a square of light on the concrete floor that he was careful to avoid. Ann lay sleeping, her clothes dirty and tattered. As she opened her brown eyes, he smiled reassuringly to her. He had finally found a kindred spirit.





Sharing the Starlit Sky

The sun has said goodbye
Succumbed to defeat as the moon gave chase
Open arms of night embrace
And hold me to the starlit sky

What is that to catch my view?
The cheery greeting of crescent moon smiles
As lights of twinkling sky beguiles
And beckons my thought's return to you

Lost in my reverie of distant soul's light
I hope you see same starry view
And know my thoughts are there with you
Though far away you are tonight



Thoughts

From the beginning we are gone.

We are freed by our minds in which we behold the wonders and places that we call
our own.

Loneliness soon becomes a distant past as we learn to live within our minds.

Controlling the anger, keeping hold of the pain in hopes of hiding the truth that
roams in our brain.

Chances were given too late in the game.

Chances we would have taken if we had them first hand.

Too much was lost to retrace our steps.

It's time to look forward to our dreams that now rest.

Izabela Zwierzynski

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William Mervin

One, lonesome blue night

Howling, passionless desires of time

Tick, Tick, Ticking onward through endless mazes

Pain ridden desires, light shown through clouds

Puffy and pure and perfect

Murky yet clear, paradoxical at best

Frantic lust for wonderful spring blossoms

Sudden array of heavenly forms

All pure colors of the earth

Quest for balance of these parted seas

Bringing a beautiful, sinister tone to the table

Truly a strange and wonderful voyage through time



The Genetics Alma Mater

Our heredity lies in chromosomes
Found within the nucleus;
DNA produces traits
Peculiar to us.

Each gene stores genetic info
Making each special, unique;
Half from each parental side
Form offspring we seek.

Genetics studies proteins
Which determine forms of life
Mapping the human genome
Eliminates strife.
Darwin's "Natural Selection"
Began the study of genes,
Then Watson & Crick deciphered
What DNA means.

Shannon Clements



THE BIRDCAGE

It's Sat AM in Allmon Hall
And Aggies sit for their exam final
In History and Parasitology;
But it could just as easily be
Poly Sci or Sociology.

Watch these Aggies as they write,
Concentrating with all their might,
Trying to capture words on a page
'Ere they're a moment's thought of age!

Of all these students I help proctor
A few revere me as "Doctor."
O'er forty students here I know
On whom this College will bestow

A diploma for courses
Which they've had on hogs or horses,
Cows or bees, bio or cheese,
Bus ad, agronomy, chem, or trees.

A few seem so well relaxed
You'd think they never had the academic boom
Lower'd on their pates
From birth to date.

Still others struggle to get their best
In that exam book for the test
Which holds them in such rapt attention
That they writhe, oblivious to all distraction.

Though they're not drafting Congressional Records,
Their pencils push with one accord.

Guess I got jealous of their comisin'
And to keep myself from dozin'
Grabbed my pen to write
And shore a modicum of their plight.

TO WHOM ALL THE LOVE IN MY HEART BELONGS

Written by: Darci Visinger

I will hold myself up at times when I feel down
With the help and understanding
Of the friends that always stick around,
Through the hardships and heartaches
That all have us bound
To one another we try to make sense
Of loud noises that come without sound

So stand tall
While others begin to fall
Into lives of their choice
My voice is silent, but still heard
To ears that had a lesson to learn
About respecting ones that trusted
And believed in lies
Truth disguised
By our own eyes
But revealed to realize
We weren't so blind
Just afraid
Betrayed to find
The truth
With proof
Of marks left behind

It's hard to comprehend losing a friend
Knowing I did what I had to do to make him understand
But in the end
I am a stronger woman
Not afraid to withstand
Pain and tears that have made me what I am



Rachel Stick

*You asked me to read my work
When your chosen love died.
For a while I could not look at it
The thought would bring tears to my eyes*

*Then you left; it was your time
You asked for it to be present once more.
How could you like something so much, of mine?
I read it, and cried, near the door.*

*The poem "Dawn" was the one you chose
It talked of silence and of sweet release.
Now that the book of your life is closed
I know you have found that lasting peace.*

*Now as I grow and live my life,
I live to keep your spirit alive.
You will be near me through all my strife
I will succeed remembering your pride.*

*You've given me wings so that I can take flight.
I think of the time when all is calm.
You have blessed this earth with your light.
Nothing stirs before the dawn.*



Restless

My restless foot,
Suspended in mid-air,
Taps a silent rhythm,
The cuffs of my pants sway
With each rocking motion,
And the plaid lines become a blue blaze.
I glance up for a second and my eye
Becomes hooked on a tiny speck of dust
Hovering in a ray of light.
It swims through the air,
Catching the light at just the right angle
So it glimmers like your glossed-
Over eyes under the harsh
Fluorescent lights.
Your words collide with the dust
And the humid air melts them together.
Then they plunge endlessly
Into a sea of looped yarn.
I raise my head
And twist my chair slightly to the right.
I uncross my legs
And pull the musty polyester from my sweaty skin.
I fix my eyes upon your face.
Each muscle tightening and pulling,
Your skin wrinkles around the corners
Of your mouth.
Your words drip off your lips and tumble
To the floor.
Your spit hits me faster than those useless
Sentences carelessly slammed together.
Once in a while I nod
To give reassurance that my
Attention is still there.
But then a speck floats
By your eyes
And dares me to watch it fall to the ground.

Birth of a
SUPERHERO

By David Molettiere

Part Two

The last time we saw Sean, she had recently undergone a transformation. You see, Sean is a girl who was a guy who was reminiscing about when she was a guy and the events that led up to the transformation. Sean and his newfound friend, Sherry, were involved in a chaotic mess at a costume party. After a lengthy pause, Sean looked down and realized that he had been transformed.

After the chaos, Sean looked again at his costume, noting all the subtle differences between the store-bought costume and the one he was currently wearing. He also noted that he was a male with real breasts. He, now she, had to admit that she looked good and the costume looked good on her. Sean realized that there was something else she had to tell Sherry. Looking around the club, amidst the crowd, she spotted Sherry. Sean called out to get her attention. Coming up next to Sherry, Sean asked, "What happened?"

"I'm not sure, but you really look like a girl, not to mention Supergirl!" Sherry said, continuing, "Let's get out of here and get back to my apartment." Just as Sean was about to follow Sherry, Sean was pushed and she put her arms out to break her fall. Instead of falling to the ground, she started to fly. After realizing she had Supergirl's powers, she plucked Sherry out of the crowd and started to fly out an open window and towards the apartment.

Not having said a word during the flight, when they arrived in the apartment, Sean said, "I think I'll be wearing this costume for a while. Beside, I am a girl now. Can you believe it, I'm a GIRL! I'm Supergirl! At least until this transformation or whatever happened wears off."

Sherry stared to Sean, asking, "What makes you think it will wear off?" Sean replied, "I...I don't know. I'm not sure I'm ready to deal with the alternative yet. But

I do know...as long as I have these powers...well, with great power comes great responsibility, or so I've been told. I think there may be people at the club who need my help. Maybe I can find out how to reverse the transformations."

Sherry looked at Sean in disbelief and asked, "You're going back to the club?"

"Yes. If nothing else, it'll take my mind off of...you know. Will you come with me?" Sean asked.

Sherry, still shocked with her transformation into a witch, said, "No...not yet. I still need to come to terms with all of this."

Sean frowned at her decision, but knew that not everyone was raised on comic-book ethics. "Well, okay, I'll catch up with you later." She then flew out the still open window towards the "Wild Turkey Kicker Club" again.

As she flew high into the air, she felt the wind once again caress her, blowing through her hair. Looking down with a start, she realized that she was hundreds of feet up in the air with nothing underneath her; startled, she nearly fell to the ground until her momentary panic subsided and she regained control of her flight power. "This is definitely going to take some getting used to," she muttered to herself.

As she approached the club, she could hear police sirens that grew louder. From her aerial viewpoint, she could see that police cars had surrounded the building and several ambulances had arrived as well. There was a great commotion as people (and transformed Halloween costumes) milled about in a frenzy. Policemen were trying to calm the crowd down, while other officers began stretching some sort of yellow tape around the building. Sean could barely make out some sort of black markings on the tape. "I wonder what's written on the tape," Sean thought to

herself, and she found her eyes refocusing so that she could read the words "Police Line-Do Not Cross."

"Oh, yeah," she thought, "I've got Telescopic Vision. Jeez, some superhero I'm going to make, I keep forgetting I've got powers." After checking to make sure that there was no immediate danger, she flew down next to one of the cops and asked, "Can I be of any assistance, Officer?" The officer was clearly startled by her sudden appearance. As he began to respond, she found herself instead listening to a conversation taking place a dozen yards away. Two teenagers were among the crowd who had gathered to see what was going on, and they began to discuss Supergirl.

"Does she, like, have all the powers of Superman?" one asked the other. "Yeah, dude. She's like his cousin, you know," was the reply.

"So, she could, like, spin around the earth so fast that time would go backwards?"

"What? That's stupid. You're thinking of that stupid movie, right?" Their discussion trailed off. Suddenly, Sean realized that the policeman had finished talking and was staring at her, as if expecting a reply.

"I-I'm sorry. Just a moment," she told him, and flew back into the sky. Time travel. Of course! She could fix it. She could fix everything. Gathering all her strength while trying not to listen to those nagging doubts in the back of her head, she prepared to fly faster than ever before, faster than anyone had ever traveled, faster than the speed of light itself. She accelerated suddenly, becoming a blur in the sky. "Must...go...faster..." she thought to herself, as the colors of the buildings and trees beneath her became an undistinguishable smear. The wind whipped

violently through her hair and cape, but still she poured on the speed, accelerating faster and faster until she knew deep inside that she could go no faster, realizing that unlike the comic book Supergirl, Sean's speed had limits. Reluctant to accept this, she flew onward for a few minutes more before resigning herself to this fact. She couldn't travel faster than light; thus, she couldn't travel through time. She began to slow to a stop, while wondering if anyone at the party had dressed as a time traveler. Such considerations would have to wait, however. Looking around, she realized that she could well be in serious trouble. Apparently, during her flight, she had left the earth behind and was now surrounded by the inky blackness of space, with no planets visible anywhere nearby.

STILL EARLY NOVEMBER 1ST, 1993

Looking around, Sean could not help but remember those fateful words from the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. "Space is big. Really big. You just won't believe how vastly, hugely, mind-bogglingly big it is. I mean, you may think it's a long way down to the chemist, but that's just peanuts to space." Surrounded by the inky blackness of space, speckled with thousands of points of light, she had to agree with the quote. The feeling of weightlessness, combined with a lack of landmarks, only helped her feel more and more lost. "Damn!" she screamed at the top of her lungs, or tried to; all she accomplished was allowing the air in her lungs to silently disperse into the vacuum of space. "Great," she thought, miserably, "I can't even talk to myself. Still, take things calmly and logically, and let's see if I can get back home."

She knew that she had flown for only about ten or fifteen minutes, all at less than the speed of light. "But how much less than the speed of light?" she wondered. She knew that the sun was only a few, maybe eight, light-minutes from Earth. So, presumably, she must have traveled quite a few light-minutes from

Earth, or it would be visible. Clearly, while she had gone less than the speed of light, she must have been travelling at near-light velocities. She wasn't sure how valid her reasoning was, but it was at least a start. Still, she reckoned, the sun ought to still be visible...Looking around, she found what must be the sun, behind her. It looked smaller than normal, but there was no mistaking it. Now all she needed to do was find Earth. Of course, here Telescopic Vision would help...but it wouldn't be enough. After all, space is big. She could stare at a billion different places in the sky, and never find the right one, even assuming she knew how much to "focus" her Telescopic Vision. "All astronomical bodies in the solar system reflect the light from the sun," she reasoned, "so, therefore, all I have to do is find out which one of these bright dots is actually Earth."

She began a mind-numbing, painstaking process of staring at each point of light, until she determined it was not the Earth; then, she would stare at another point of light. At times, she would lose track of which stars she had already checked and had to start over. For what felt like days, she continued, cursing her carelessness all the while. "If only I hadn't tried to time travel," she bemoaned.

Yet with each self-reprimand, she grew more frustrated and began to lose track more often of which stars she had already examined. She could feel the hours pass, but had no way to keep time; she hadn't worn a watch as Supergirl; for all she knew, days could be passing and she was helpless to do anything. Finally, it all became too much for her. The vast emptiness and the ceaseless boredom were pressures too great to bear. She yelled silent curses at herself, at the Earth, and at nothing in particular. "If only I hadn't let Sherry dress me up this way," she thought, "Damn her! It's all her fault that I'm now...this." For once, she forced herself to examine her new body through the skintight costume, not daring to look beneath, for fear that what she knew must be true, would be true, or would

become true, somehow, as if she would jinx reality by checking on it, as if the change wouldn't be real as long as she didn't accept it.

For the first time, she pulled the tight blue leotard away from her chest and looked down to see her well-formed breasts. "That's not so bad," she thought to herself, "I can live with these." Her hands then reached down between her legs, and stopped for a moment, still hesitant to explore the unmapped territory. She realized that her hesitation was similar to that felt when slowly walking into a cold swimming pool, taking each step slowly, despite the fact that jumping in all at once would acclimate one much more easily. These thoughts allowed her to stall for time, and she decided to take the plunge, by closing her eyes and stripping...when she was ready, she could open her eyes and see the truth.

With eyes firmly closed, Sean first unfastened her cape, noting that it now attached directly to the costume, where before it had tied around the neck. She then unbuckled her belt, which before the change had been merely a loop of cloth tied around the skirt, designed to look as if it were interlaced with loops on the skirt somehow. Next, she pulled down her skirt, which had originally not been a separate piece of the costume. This left her clad in leotard and boots. Fearful but determined, she pulled her arms back through the sleeves of the leotard. She then slowly pulled the leotard down, feeling it smoothly glide over her body. She then kicked it free of her body, and opened her eyes. "So, it's really true," she thought to herself, as she gazed upon her lovely female body.

After a few minutes of self-inspection, she knew that she had to get back to the business of getting back home. She flew around and picked up her discarded articles of clothing, which were floating slowly away from her. As she reached for her belt, she noticed how weird it looked here in space, as half of it was almost completely black, being between her and the sun so that no sunlight reflected off

this half. Fortunately, the belt was not small or rigid enough that it could remain between her and the sun or else she might not be able to see it at all.

"Wait a minute! I'm a moron!" she thought suddenly. "I flew away from the Earth during the middle of the night. The only part of the Earth I should be able to see would be the dark part, which I wouldn't be able to see!" Though not sure that this made sense, she felt that this was an important realization. From this vantage point, she would never be able to find the Earth by looking at bright points. Quickly getting dressed, she reassessed her options, and decided that she needed to find a place where she would be able to see the sunlight reflecting off the Earth. Without any other landmarks to go by, she decided to fly towards the sun. She pointed herself at it, and began to accelerate, pushing herself to her limits as she had before. This time, she kept her eyes focused on her destination. As the blueness of the sun shifted, she realized that she should slow down...at near-light speeds it would be hard to determine how close she was getting, since the light might not be reaching her eyes yet. Unfortunately, she had no way of knowing how fast she was going, but eventually decided on a speed that felt fast enough to actually get somewhere, but slow enough that she could still see well.

Soon, the sun loomed before her, massive and huge. She turned and began examining bright objects that might be planets and was soon able to find the Earth. She headed for home, again at this not too fast, not too slow speed. As the minutes passed during her tedious flight, her thoughts again returned to how this was all Sherry's fault. "If not for her, I wouldn't have had to waste all this time in space, and I'd still be a guy, and oh, how I hate her..." This became her litany as she flew, all her thoughts focused on her anger.

Eventually she reentered Earth's atmosphere and was able to find her way home. The sun was going down, and she considered going to bed, but decided to

visit Sherry, to have it out with her once and for all. Swooping down to Sherry's apartment, she knocked, careful to control her super strength. Sherry, who wore a look of surprise and relief, momentarily answered the door.

"Sean! You're back! Where were you? I was so worried," Sherry began. "Come in, come in, tell me everything that's happened." Sean was taken aback at first by this friendliness, which cracked the shell of anger she kept around her thoughts. Stepping inside, she was further distracted as Sherry hugged her, and continued, "Gosh, it's so good to see you. Well?" Sean began to try to explain, but found herself hesitating, unsure how to reconcile her anger with this thoughtful, caring person. "Oh, wait," Sherry remarked, not letting Sean get a word in edgewise, "Come see what I've made for you."

Sherry led Sean over to her bedroom, to a new door that hadn't been there before. "Go ahead, open it," Sherry said. Sean stepped towards the door cautiously, noting a key sticking out of a keyhole. She turned the key, and felt the door unlock. Pulling the key out of the keyhole, she noticed what a peculiar key it was...it was yellow, and looked like an arrow, like the key to Superman's Fortress of Solitude. She opened the door, looked inside...and saw a tremendous room filled with all matters of equipment and memorabilia.

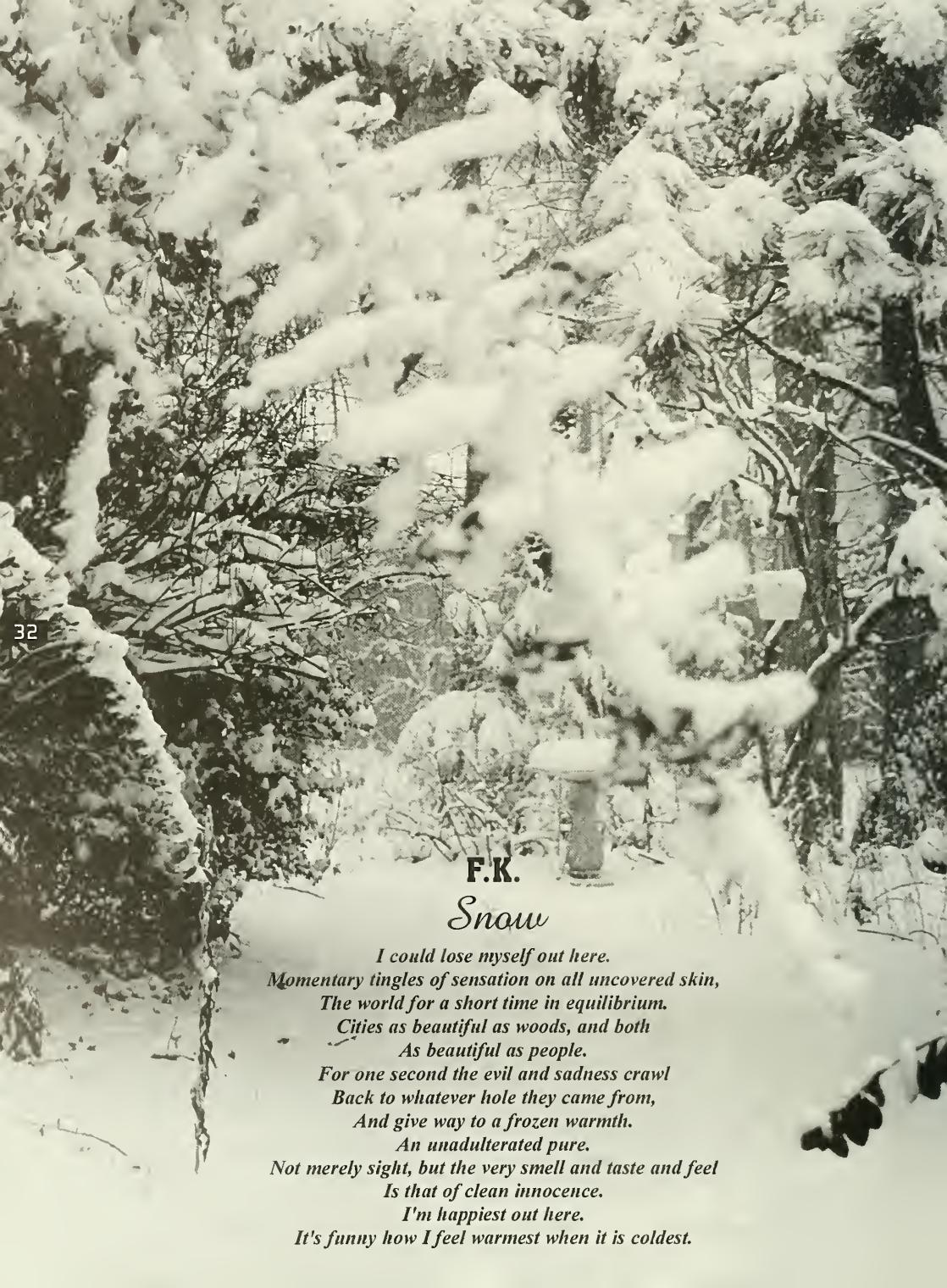
"It's for you," Sherry stated, noting the surprised look on Sean's face. "It...It's wonderful," Sean commented, still in shock. Against one wall was a statue consisting of Jor-El and Lara (Superman's parents) holding up the planet Krypton, just like in Superman's fortress. Over on one table, she could see a model of the bottle city of Kandor, and a variety of statues that represented the friends and allies of the comic book hero Supergirl, including her pet Streaky, the super-cat. There was even a wall with various lead-lined drawers, labeled with the names of different types of kryptonite; perhaps these drawers contained (fake?) kryptonite of each

sort. Apart from the memorabilia, there was also a large bed, extensive computer facilities, unusual exercise equipment, and so much more.

"I'm glad you like it I felt I should do something, since I do feel sorta responsible for you getting transformed, and I know I can't make that up to you. And now we can be roomies," Sherry said. Hearing these words, Sean realized what a mean-spirited, thoughtless heel she herself had been to be thinking such angry thoughts about Sherry, who clearly did not deserve them. A tear formed in her eye, as she was overcome with emotion. At Sherry's prompting, Sean showed Sherry around the room as Sean described the significance of the various memorabilia, while also telling Sherry about being lost in space. Then, they talked late into the night (after Sean found out the date: it was now November 4th, 1993), discussing their feelings about being transformed, and about how their lives would be different now. The bond between the two grew even stronger. Sean began to wonder if the two of them would have ever been so close if they had not been transformed. A part of her found herself grateful for the transformation, and this surprised her.

The telephone started to ring and it startled both of them. Sherry answered it and then hung up after a few "yeahs."

"That was Steve. He asked if I could come over to his place for a few minutes. Something about asking me something...must be a guy thing," Sherry said with a smirk. She continued, "I'll be back in about a half hour to an hour. Here take these," Sherry gave Sean a few Supergirl comic books to read. "Read these, they are the newest issues." She then turned and grabbed her purse and jacket and left through the door. Sean took her new comics and went to her beautiful Fortress of Solitude.



F.K.

Snow

*I could lose myself out here.
Momentary tingles of sensation on all uncovered skin,
The world for a short time in equilibrium.
Cities as beautiful as woods, and both
As beautiful as people.
For one second the evil and sadness crawl
Back to whatever hole they came from,
And give way to a frozen warmth.
An unadulterated pure.
Not merely sight, but the very smell and taste and feel
Is that of clean innocence.
I'm happiest out here.
It's funny how I feel warmest when it is coldest.*

THE CIRCLE

The first tremendous flicker of light appears
Blueness and grayness and that first shimmering beam
Bringing forth balloons and licorice to slumbering armies
How radiant and pure is this moment of truth
That purest of moments when the whispering evening ceases
A full circle has been completed and yet born again
Triumph comes for the legions of light dwellers
The fear and loathing disintegrate wonderfully
Uncovered are the masses of possums and beggars
Attempting to eke an existence from the core of life
How can one fully explain the existence of such inexplicables
Twisted tongues and storytellers, incapable of justice
Soon this will all pass and clarity will be permanent
That is until it is shattered once again like clockwork
All that is true and pure, covered to the naked eye
Until that one tremendous, perfect flicker returns

* * * * *

Denise Ancharski

I don't know why you always wear hats,
It's probably because I'm injecting rats.
While you are growing grass,
I am trying to pass another class.

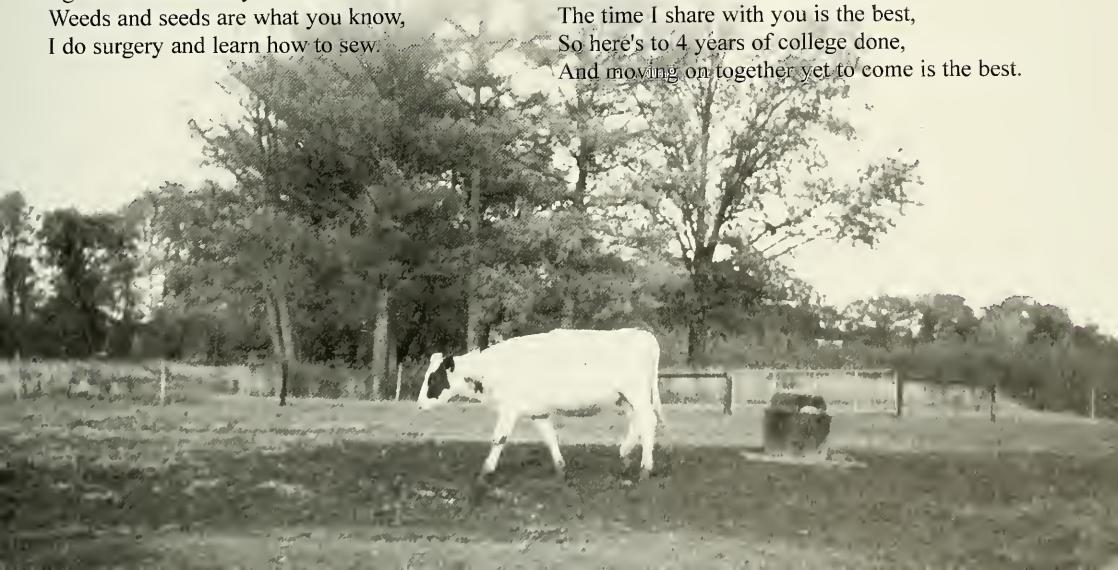
Grass and rats we each know,
The grass is what you always mow.
I learned to handle and move a cow,
And all about lab animal chow.

You go to class to look at weeds,
I go to Anat. and Phys. with Dr. Reed.
Weeds and seeds are what you know,
I do surgery and learn how to sew.

I learn about Nutrition and Repro,
You walk around and round you go.
You go to class and lab and work,
I do the same but this doesn't work.

I'm not with you to know how grass grows,
You don't know why West Nile infects crows.
So here we go another day,
From here to there we never stray.

We started in Wolfsohn and on we went,
From dorm to dorm so much time spent.
The time I share with you is the best,
So here's to 4 years of college done,
And moving on together yet to come is the best.



Sudden darkness, blackness
chasing away all signs of light.
Fear and terror fill the air
bringing false images of night

Water plummeting towards the earth
at first calmly, peaceful, making you relax
Suddenly, without a warning, it picks up
Almost with the final blow of an ax.

Rain falling swiftly
Angrily towards the ground
Taking out the harshness
on anything around
Just as it started
Suddenly it's no more
As the final bit of rain
Makes its home upon the floor
Just as this is happening
Color streaks across the sky
Making people stop & stare
and ask the question why...

SELFLESS ESSENCE

Voices penetrate the thick distance
Between bleeding hearts
Deep the emotion
Selfish schemes of
Immoral plot
Elevated among many luring cries
Heart suspended, dripping
The source of life onto scorned heads
Dare to gaze into the eyes of HIM
Whom you curse
Shock, hushed silence
Horizon dipped in a black cauldron
Incessant darkness
HE was one of us
But none of us
Trying to share HIS sinless state
Succeeding only in HIS death
Fortunate HE didn't share our
MIND.

Dreams

The mountains whisper my name
As evening shadows fall.
The gentle breeze envelops me,
Takes my soul to heights unknown.
The faint echo of the cry of a wolf
Resounds forever in my ear,
As I lie in the field of my dreams.

The sunset caresses the sky
With brilliant, magical colors,
As I behold the horizon of my choice.
The grasses of the pasture sway
As if to the music of the wind.

The field of my dreams is a place
Where I go to kindle my hope
And let it grow.

No one can enter without a dream,
No one can leave without hope and peace.

The mountains will always whisper my name,
As long as I lie in the field of my dreams.

BECKY RUBIN

If only she tried

*If only she tried
All that could have been attempted,
Was washed down that emotional drain.
Feelings floating on a spiral pathway
With no end nor beginning.
Was it the legitimate thing?
To alter this state of mind
Time was no element
An assignment, a responsibility, only a simple task.
And now it's too late,
To return to that vanquishing period of dismay
And reflect over those choices
If only she tried
Upon which enraged emotions pour out.
That's it...nothing left to do but wait,
For another opportunity,
Or another ridiculous reason to be careless.
She could achieve,
If only she tried.*

ANDREW STUTLER

How do I?

How do I love this woman before me?
Like my heart cries out from her to me?
Like a summer's night that Shakespeare said?
Or a moonlit night with stars overhead?
In her eyes I see all that is me,
Those deep blue eyes so full of caring.
They show what love she has for me,
By God's own hands to give to me.
The rest is her caring, her love and time,
I have with her makes my words rhyme.
In harmony we'll always be,
She cares so deeply and comforts me.
I can't describe those eyes for me,
They show my world, my life, her and me.
I know we'll always be as one,
But without her my life is none.
So stay with me, as we grow old,
How do I stay with you, I love you so.

Provocateur

The rain has ended. The newly washed stars
Hang suspended,
Shimmering, plump, and freshly white.
The night, with all its comforting sounds --
Crickets calling, foliage sighing
Speaks softly to me, to my hungering soul.
The trees whisper with a gentle insistence,
"Soon...soon," for
My Yurioshka is tonight
So far away;
Removed from sight,
But never from heart.

In the distance an owl abruptly interrogates the night,
And I awaken. Still,
I think once more of that kiss we stole,
And of those twinkling Russian eyes,
And the sweet dark wine of your Russian soul.

Angelica

'Tis evening, time for rest. I close my sleep-weighted eyelids, and empty my mind. The soft light of the Luna-illumined night reveals the desk in my study, the books of the day all nestled in slumber. I feel my muscles relaxing, my mind wandering pleasantly, as if I am adrift upon the cradling ocean; the even waves of sleep lull me to peaceful rest. My hearing dims, as I drift farther out on the soothing sea of Somnis. Yet gradually I become aware of a quiet, soft sound that could almost be said to shimmer. Drowsily I open one eye, and gaze in the direction of the whisper-soft sound-the wispy sensation of delicate wind-chimes. But the night is still, the trees aslumber. Through the tranquil light that coolly bathes my desk, I espy a being, a white, soft shape that at first I think is but a dollop of Luna's luminescence. But no: it speaks!

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"Who- -what are you?" I murmur groggily, opening the other eye with wonder.

"Why, I am an angel, come to visit."

"What?" I ask, shaking my head to dispel the langour. The figure persists.

"I am one of the Lord's own angels," my nocturnal visitor answers quietly. "Come, let me set this down." So saying, the gentle creature produced a lamp of great brilliance, an exquisite lily-shaped vessel of light.

Astounded, I query, "How does this lamp work?"

"By sundrops," he replies gravely.

"By sundrops?" I echo blankly.

"Bits of the sun," he explained patiently.

"Oh, I see." I didn't totally see, though.

"Come, let us share some sublime ambrosia." From beneath a fold of the angelic creature's robe, he withdrew a carafe of superb craftsmanship and singular beauty. This elegant vessel, amethyst-hued, sparkled invitingly with an aromatic liquid. Presenting two cups of hammered gold, the angel poured the honey-gold fluid, which we quaffed eagerly. The moon-kissed beverage was spicy-sweet and satisfying.

The delphinium-eyed angel smiled, his rubicund cheeks glowing, his blond excelsior hair gracefully draping his gentle long-lashed eyes.

"You are so- -so very beautiful," I murmured entranced, gazing in awe at the seraphic being. "May I touch you?"

The angel grinned impishly, revealing two rows of pearly teeth. "You may, if you so desire."

The skin, fair and warm, was like butter-soft suede, the hair full and downy. The wings, however, I mustn't touch, "For they are powdered, you see. Rather like a butterfly's. The powder must not be removed. Without it, scarce could I fly."

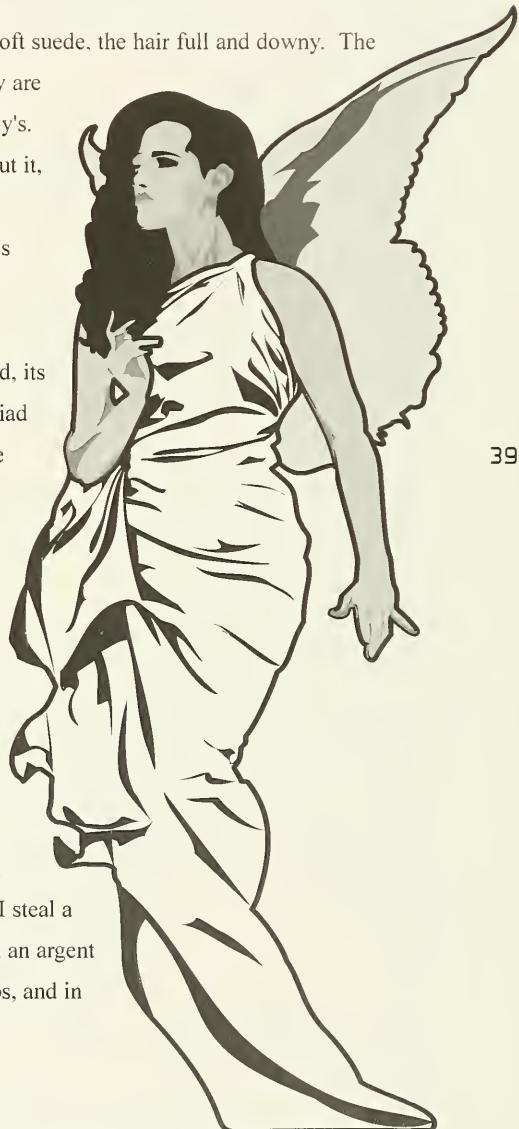
"I understand," I replied quietly, my senses beginning to reel from the heady drink.

The angel laughed, his mellifluous voice lilting like a meadow-brook. As it laughed, its wings trembled lightly, glittering like myriad silvery sequins, enchantingly catching the rays of the sun-drop lamp.

We talked for two- -or was it three? - hours. Then the angel said, "Now I must take leave. Farewell, little mortal one, farewell."

* * * * *

The sun is in my sleepy eyes this morning. I stretch and yawn luxuriously. Apparently, I had the most celestial dream last night! Then, in a moment of reverie, I steal a glance at my tidy desk. It is spangled with an argent powder. And on the desk, two golden cups, and in the cups, sweet nectar-wine.



Is it love, or just infatuation?

You touch my hand, and my heart pounds.

You talk, and my ears tingle with happiness.

What is it that makes me feel this way?

Is it love, or just infatuation?

I pick up the phone, ready to call you at home,

but my fingers can not dial your number.

I go to your door, ready to knock,

but my fist stays at my side.

Why can't I do it?

What's keeping me?

Is it love, or just infatuation?

I count down the days until I see you again.

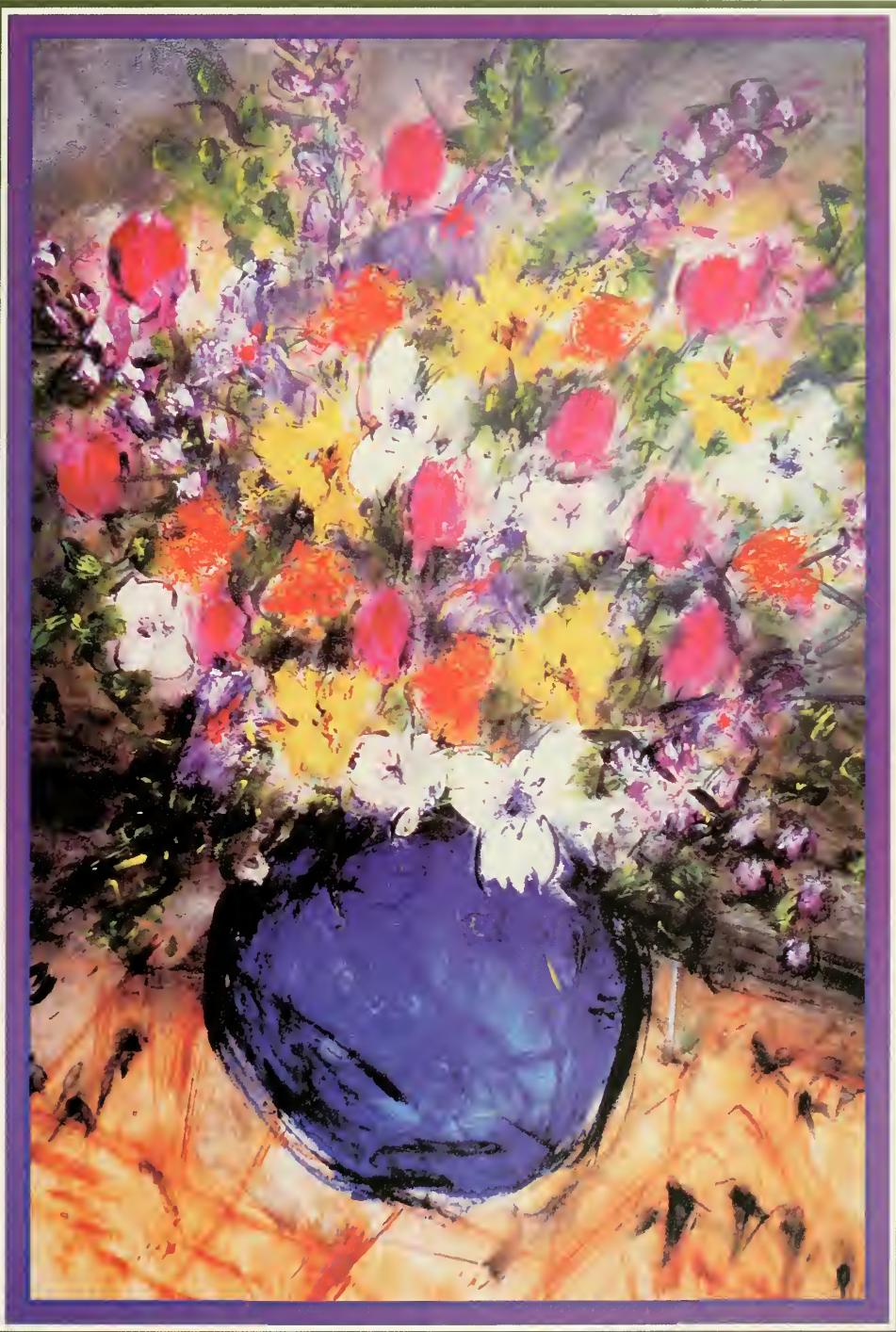
7,6,5,4,3,2,1... one more day until I see

your smile and hear your voice.

It has been a week, yet it feels like a year.

You make my life happier just by saying hi.

Is it love, or just infatuation?



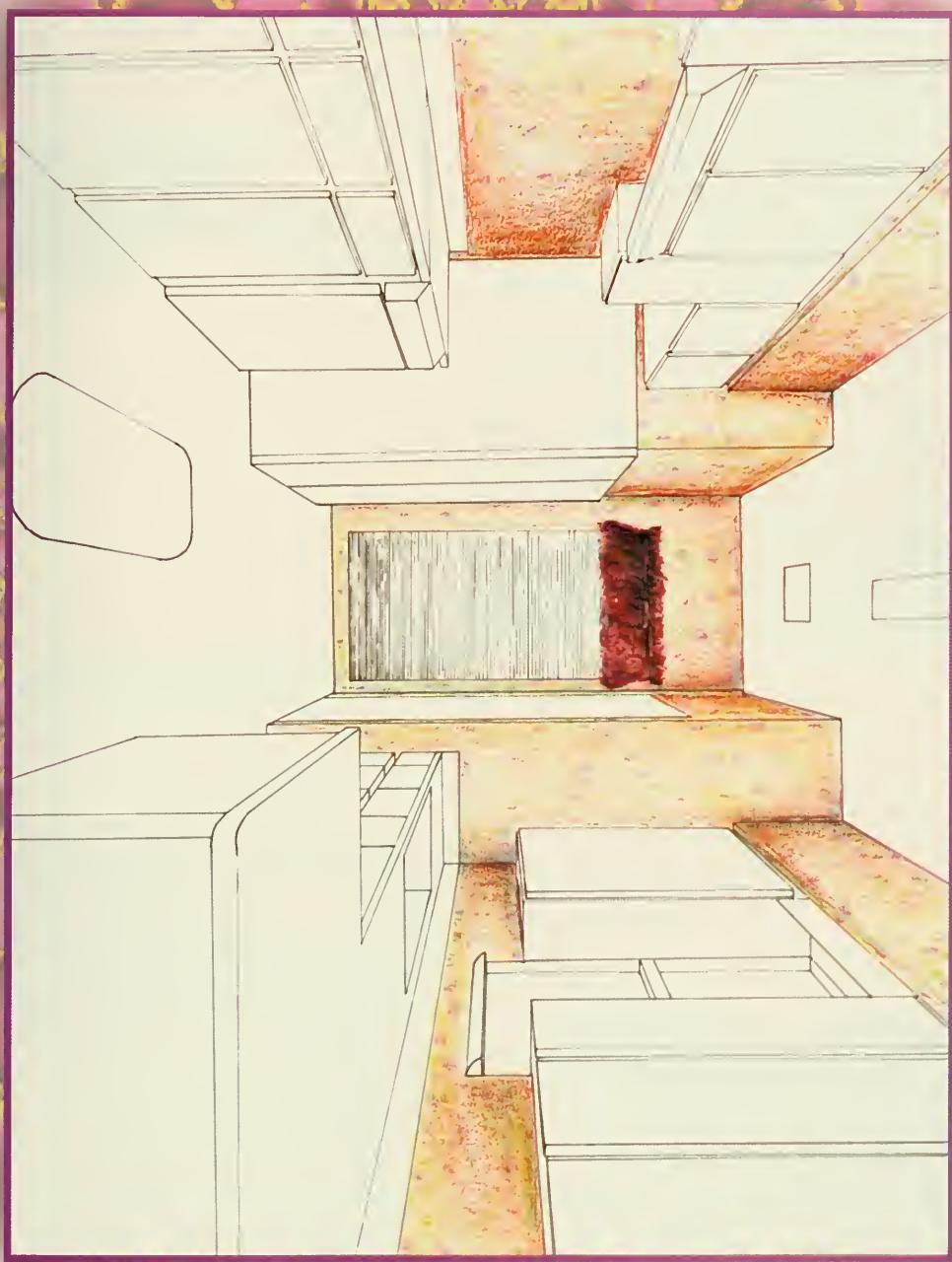














48

“JERSEY CRANBERRY HARVEST”



4

Melicent Salani

Where Uncertainty Replaces Being

Fantasize

Visualize

see her

inside

Show her to

me

Naked to the world

Don't be ashamed

*Grasp the beauty
that is*

you.

*Internal resolution
anxiety*

procrastination

*None of these
hold
any importance*

*For I shall see you
for who you are
Give me the time
to expose*

*What is pure
in you*

Behind the darkness

frigid

Bleak exterior

*An incandescent glow
fades to black*

In your eyes.

Cry Freedom

You came to me with tears in your eyes
Hope in your lies
And I brushed it all away

You came to me with hate in your heart
Anger in your soul
And I tried to help control

But you want more than life can give
Happiness starts in the way you live
Maybe you'll find that peace of mind
When I am long and gone
For now I'll stay
I pray and pray
But my heart yearns for freedom

Let fear and wrath roll off your back
Let trust open up your eyes
Let all you care for in life have meaning
For there freedom cries

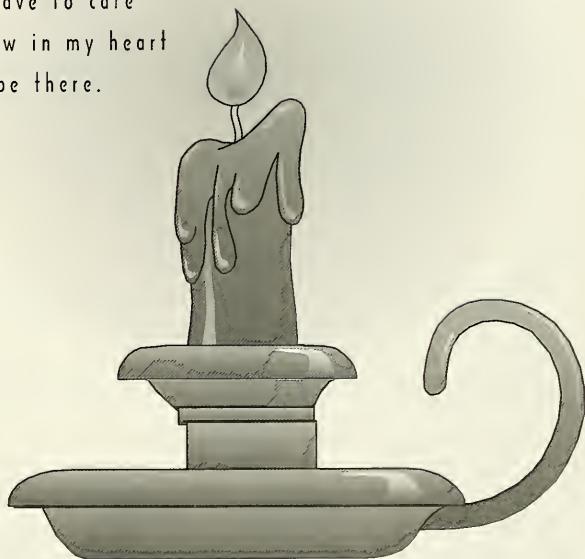
Rebecca Stoprya

The Other Side: A Confession of Social Failure

I've never felt so alone,
unwanted
Lack of affection,
attention,
and interaction.
No one to call "friend,"
no one to listen,
no one to hold me when I cry.
Just sit there,
watch the tears roll down my cheeks.
No empathy,
lack of compassion.
Only the walls of my cell hear my cries.
The cold concrete
encompasses my sorrow.
I want to feel warmth,
have someone to turn to.
Just a shoulder would suffice.
I thought it was possible
for me to belong.
This hope no longer exists.
A nobody,
from the other side of the tracks.

Audrey Hause

I'm completely alone
With no one to turn to
Just watching a candle
letting it burn
No one understands
No one knows why
So I sit by myself
and let myself cry
I pray for a person-
who knows the real me
I pray for the person
with whom I am free
Where I won't have to worry
And I won't have to care
Because I know in my heart
He'll always be there.



"It Ended Without Us Knowing"

By Matt Bergman

For some of us, it ended without us knowing.
The shadows we once methodically walked upon, now only exist within our dreams.
The names and statistics we used to worship are still buried under flooding lights.
New opportunities will arise.
We will see the indifference through biased eyes.
It was all supposed to end the way it began.
A bitter transformation of maturity.
An optimistic glow upon emerald fields.
Upon attire of personal and assembled battles.
Upon blues and whites.
Upon greens and golds.
Upon scarlets and silvers.
We are an hour older now.
Established in our gains and mistakes.
From our strengths and weakness.
These are the lesson we will leave behind.
To be guarded among empty thrones and iron gates.
Protected by the mind and imagination.
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Flashes of yesterday will arm us with pride of tomorrow.
Our focused eyes will change into an array of colors, but they will still shine blue.
It was change that predicted our fate.
We never knew it would be too soon.
Our attempts to make it last were too late.
But it was our dead end track to fame.
It was all worth the blood and sweat.
The bonds we created will sever, but reincarnate into youth.
We will spread like seeds into the world.
And find new homes.
But for once in time, it was where we could rest our minds, bodies and souls.
It was home.
A unification of one central family.
It was everything.
It was who we were, who we are and who we will be.
Some of us will never leave the journey in our mind.
Some of us will be long gone.
For some of us, it ended without us knowing.
We can try to forget, but it will always remain.
It was our dead end track to fame.
A time to put a face behind the name.
It was and still is the ingredient to our definition.

A CHANCE TO START OVER

I met CJ on a sunny spring afternoon on Peachtree Street in Atlanta. She and her girlfriend were walking to Rich's Department store from their school: The Massey School of Fashion. My roommate at Georgia Tech was a guy from Virginia named Dan Lawson. We spent far too much time that spring driving around in his yellow Austin Healey with the top down trying to meet girls. We were going the other way on Peachtree when we spotted them. Dan made a quick U-turn and we offered to give the girls a ride. They looked at each other for a second, laughed, and accepted. The car was really a two seater, but there was some room in back. I got in back, CJ's girlfriend sat on my lap and CJ got in the passenger seat.

We ended up going for a drive. I could hear CJ and Dan talking. CJ had a laugh that quickly got my attention. It wasn't an odd laugh, there was just so much of it coming from a girl who couldn't have been taller than five foot two. The girl on my lap wanted to be a cosmetologist. I told her that was funny because I had a brother who wanted to be a cosmologist. She asked if my brother was homosexual. I repeated cosmologist, "You know, like Carl Sagan." She didn't know. I asked her what was going to be new in fashion this year. She was good for fifteen straight minutes on this subject. After about a half an hour of driving around, we stopped for something to eat.

That was when I got my first real look at CJ. She was blonde with pretty features. She had trouble with severe acne or I would have called her beautiful. She liked everything. She liked sports (watching and playing), she liked music (rock and classical), she liked to read. She was learning to cut hair at the Massey School of Fashion. Dan told her that she could practice on him. CJ said she would be happy to work on him anytime. I really liked her, but it was too late. She had already fallen for the handsome Mr. Lawson.

That was the trouble with hanging around with Dan Lawson. You always got second choice. We were both freshmen at Georgia Tech. Georgia Tech is in the middle of Atlanta. At that time, there were 5000 men enrolled and 100 females. For a freshman without a car, dating was a problem. Dan brought his car to Tech at spring break although he wasn't supposed to have one. It was a constant struggle finding a safe place to park it where it would not be vandalized or towed away because it didn't have the right parking sticker on it.

Did I mention it was difficult to meet girls? The fraternities had their choice of pledges because it was almost impossible to have a social life without help. There were girls' colleges around, but not within practical reach without a car. I was from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It was not easy for a "Yankee" to fit in at these southern fraternities. I didn't like many of them anyway. It was 1968 and all you heard was soul music. No one had heard of Jimi Hendrix. And some of the frats were still trying to get over the Civil War. On the Lincoln's Birthday holiday, some of them declared it Jefferson Davis day and marched around in Confederate uniforms. No, I didn't care for the frat scene.

I didn't even try to date anyone for the first two months at college. I had been going with a girl in high school and we had said we would try to keep things going even though she was going to Bucknell in Pennsylvania. In early November, I had a letter from her telling me she had changed her mind all because of this junior she had met at Bucknell. She proceeded to explain why she was dumping me for this guy. She listed his fine qualities. I never got to the end of the list.

I decided to try to meet a girl. About 800 other freshmen had been having the same idea. This caused me to be part of one of the oddest dating rituals I have ever seen. On Friday nights, high school girls from the Atlanta area would cruise the Tech campus, often four or five to a car. Hordes of Tech freshmen would stand on the street corners and hoot and whistle and try to cajole a car into stopping. You would have thirty or forty men on each corner of the main streets.

After observing this for a while a couple things were obvious. If a car stopped, it was immediately surrounded and you were not going to have much of a chance of talking to one of the girls unless you were very aggressive. The cars that stopped usually were full of girls who were not the best looking. That is the kindest way I can describe them. The cars with the good looking ones slowed down and then sped off. The girls who were just as desperate to meet someone as the guys were the only ones who stopped.

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Dan was just as frustrated as I was by this. He was an olive complexioned guy who was very handsome. He had a sense of humor, he was fit, he was musical, and he had charisma. His only drawback was he was only five foot eight. That didn't stop him from being heavily sought after at home in Virginia, but not at Tech. He was just another desperate freshman standing in the haze under the spot-lights.

If we were going to meet girls, we would have to do something different. It was Dan who came up with the idea. He realized that many of the cars made pass after pass down the main streets. In order to do this they had to loop around by some fairly predictable routes. Dan's idea was to go upstream. We would find a spot near a street light four or five blocks away from the crowds, but on one of the routes that many of the girls drove. Dan would stand under the streetlight and I would stand fifty yards away from him downstream. Dan would peer into the windows of the cars as they passed. He had to make sure he saw at least one good-looking girl in the car (and no boyfriends) or he wouldn't signal me. If he signaled me, I was to step out on the street in front of the onrushing car and force it to make a quick stop. Dan was to come running up along side and toss the girls a line. I was not to say a word. If we were lucky, Dan thought they would ask us to get in to go for a ride.

Dan was disappointed when I expressed some concerns about the plan. Our dialog went something like this:

"Why do you get to look into the cars?"

"Because I have the best eyesight."

"Why do I have to jump out into the street and make them stop quickly?"

"If you give them too much time they'll drive around you."

"What if I get hit?"

" You've got to be ready to jump out of the way if they won't stop."

"Why can't I say anything?"

"Your Yankee accent will be a turnoff. Besides, I know what to say."

"What are you going to say?"

"It depends on the girls."

"I'm going to have to talk eventually."

"Tell them you are from Alaska. That's weird enough. Besides, once we are in the car it will be hard for them to get rid of us just because of how you talk."

It turned out that Dan was a genius at these things. First time out, it worked just like he said. There were three girls in the car. The one riding shotgun was the prettiest and Dan slid in next to her. He had once played in a band that had a minor hit song before they disbanded, he had a sports car at home, and this girl had the prettiest hair he had ever seen. He got all that out in the space of about 30 seconds.

I looked over at the girl sitting next to me. It was dark so it was hard to see. She broke the ice first. "Where y'all from?" she asked. Her voice was like warm syrup. I swear that a pretty southern girl could read a phone directory and make it sound like music.

"Philadelphia," I answered. For the first time, I hated the sound of my own voice.

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"Mississippi?" she asked. Dan coughed in the front seat. I had forgotten the plan.

"No, Alaska," I said weakly. "Philadelphia, Alaska," I said with more conviction.

"What are y'all doin' down here?"

"It's a lot warmer," I said. She just nodded like that made a world of sense.

We rode around for a while and then the girls said they had to go home. Dan got the pretty girl's phone number and then dated her for a couple weeks. It was very impressive to the residents of the dorm. A pretty girl driving up to the front of the dorm to get Dan. He got a standing ovation one Saturday night. Once Dan brought his car from home, we didn't have to stand on corners anymore. CJ and her friend were the first girls we had picked up right off the street.

Dan and CJ started to see each other every night. That summer they exchanged letters every other day. That fall, when Dan and I were sophomores, we got an apartment off campus. CJ practically lived at out apartment. She had switched schools by then. She was really quite smart. She had gotten into Duke originally. Her boyfriend of three years had been at Duke while CJ finished her last year of high school. She had dreamed of their going to college together and then marriage. Just before she went

off to college, after spending the whole summer with her boyfriend, he broke the news to her that he had been seeing someone steadily at school and he wouldn't be dating CJ at Duke. CJ went to pieces. She dropped out of Duke before the term started and hence ended up at the Massey School of Fashion when she felt she had to do something. She decided over the summer, between letters to Dan, that she wanted to be a teacher and she transferred to Agnes Scott College. Agnes Scott was a girls' college outside of Atlanta. If you were dating a girl from that college you were dating a "Scottie." CJ had so many advanced placement courses she started there as a sophomore.

I don't know how either of them passed anything. I had a part time job and I was in the chemical engineering program. It seemed like I was always studying. Dan and CJ went to movies together at least once a week. They wrote songs and sang together. CJ wrote poems about him. They went for long drives and picnics in the country.

Then one weekend in October, Dan announced that he was going to have a visitor the next weekend. It was a girl he knew from home. Her name was Joni. Dan had been dating Joni since high school. He had mentioned her to CJ, but it had seemed to CJ that she was a past girl friend. Not a present one. CJ just stared at him after he told her. Dan decided to tell her while I was in the room to avoid a big blow-up. CJ started to cry. After a minute, she wiped her eyes and went out the door and drove herself back to Agnes Scott.

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Joni came in on a Friday night. She looked a little like CJ. She was a short blonde with about the same build. In my opinion she wasn't as pretty, but her skin was clear. That made a difference to Dan. While she was with us, she waited on Dan. She cooked for him, she cleaned his room, she did his laundry, and they didn't seem to get much sleep. The next weekend, CJ was back in the apartment acting as if nothing had happened. At least, that is what Dan thought. I thought she had lost a little of her spontaneity.

After Christmas, the second bomb hit. Another girl came to visit Dan. This one was named Ali. If Joni had been the girl next door, this one was like a model you see in the Victoria's Secret ads of today. But she was such a bitch. CJ was back after Ali stayed for a week but CJ wasn't the same. Her self-confidence was gone.

At the end of our sophomore year, Dan decided he was transferring to a school in Arizona. He was just about flunking out of Georgia Tech even though he was taking Industrial Management. This was the course of study most of the football players took. It taught you very practical things like how to calculate how many toilets to put into a new manufacturing plant. It was quite an accomplishment to be failing this.

I asked Dan what he was going to do about CJ. He was honest with me. He said the CJ was the most fun of any girl he had ever dated. What he really wanted in life was a girl with CJ's personality, Joni's willingness to wait on him and Ali's looks. He hadn't found her yet, but he was going to keep trying.

CJ fell apart emotionally again. She wrote to me a few times over that summer. A lot of it I didn't like to read. She was second-guessing herself about what she should have done to keep Dan, like it was her fault he was a jerk. She talked about never going out with men again. She talked about suicide.

CJ had pulled herself together enough by the fall to go back to Agnes Scott for our junior year. I had tried to fix her up with some of the guys in my class. But she found them without personality compared to Dan. Actually, engineers are without personality compared to most people, but it was especially true compared to Dan. She fixed me up with a girl from Scott Whom I fell in love with. Lucy and I dated my whole junior year. I would see CJ once in a while and I would talk to her on the phone, but not nearly as often as in the past.

Come our senior year, Lucy dumped me for someone far better looking (and he had money to boot). I didn't see it coming. I had bought an engagement ring that I never had the chance to give her. I went into a funk, writing some of the worst and most depressing poems that have ever been put to paper. However, getting dumped was something that I bounced back from a lot quicker than CJ. By Christmas of our senior year, I was ready to date again. I thought about CJ.

I called her up and asked what she was doing. She was going to a party that night at the apartment of some people she had met while doing volunteer work for homeless people. She asked me to come along. I asked if it was a date. There was an uncharacteristic silence; CJ was seldom-caught off-guard. She finally said, "Do you want it to be?" I said yes. "Oh, this should be interesting," she said with that waterfall laugh of hers. She told me to pick her up at eight.

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Her new friends lived in a garden apartment out towards Stone Mountain. It was an interesting group. The guys there were mostly bikers. The host had just bought a new Harley Davidson, and it was proudly displayed in the middle of the living room. The girls were kind of hard looking. I immediately felt out of place. CJ fit in like she had known them all her life. There was some marijuana, but it was mostly beer that people were consuming.

The main entertainment was the Grateful Dead, playing on the stereo. The guys would stand in a circle around the bike. They would sing along with the lyrics to each of the Dead songs, have a beer, and start on the next song. Song after song, hour after hour this went on. I counted three sessions on "Uncle John's Band." After one of these renditions, a discussion of sorts broke out as to the real meaning of the song. One person opined that Uncle John was really John the Baptist calling his people to God. Another thought he was Jerry Garcia, calling his people home for some good weed.

About 1 a.m., the best friend of the host got on the bike in the middle of the living room. His name was Bear. He was a Ford mechanic. He was at least six foot two and very stocky with a thick mountain man type beard. He screamed, "Let's start this thing up." He proceeded to kick-start it to life. The roar of the engine in the small room was deafening. The walls were shaking. Immediately, a blue haze filled the room. The extra loud sound of the bike in this little room caught Bear off guard and he popped the clutch. The bike spun forward, hit the coffee table, and went

directly to the right through the kitchen and into a plate glass sliding door that led to the patio. The bike went down on its side and stalled.

You could hardly see in the room because of the smoke. There was a three-foot long tread mark on the green shag rug. The sliding glass door was cracked. Beer had spilled everywhere. After a shocked couple of seconds, everyone started cheering and applauding and telling the Bear to do it again. I thought our host might be a little upset, but he wasn't. he put his arm around the Bear. "Nice going, Genius," he said. He looked at me and said, "I'm not worried about the apartment. I'm moving out at the end of the month anyway."

CJ and I could not stop laughing about the party all the way back to her dorm. It was about 2 a.m. when we pulled up to the front door. On the path, on the way up to the door, I took her hand. She looked at me in surprise. Then she said, "Oh, that's right, I forgot it was a date." At the front door, I put one hand on her right shoulder and my right hand lightly on her cheek. I tried to kiss her. She started to laugh, giggle really. I got a little embarrassed and I turned the kiss into a French kiss. At that she started to laugh even more. The kiss disintegrated into a hug.

She looked up at me. "You know what the trouble is?" I shook my head. I was sulking about how the kiss that I had carefully planned had been a miserable failure.

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"The trouble is that we became friends, before we tried dating and falling in love. We got it out of order. We know what is good about each other and we know each other's faults. There's not a whole lot of mystery here."

"It's a mystery to me why you laughed in my face when I tried to kiss you."

"I remember when you first went out with Lucy. She came in my room and told me about the good-night kiss. Holding her shoulder, lightly touching her face, a regular kiss becoming deeper." She had me there.

"I think falling in love has to have mystery and surprise in it. You need the rush of adrenaline. You need to feel like you are walking on air." She was smiling at me as she said this. She could tell that I was embarrassed.

"I don't make you feel like you are walking on air, do I?"

"You make me laugh. You are my first choice when I have trouble in math, or trouble with the car, or when I feel that life doesn't have much purpose and I have to be with someone. I need you telling me for the hundredth time that I was going to lose Dan no matter what I did. I need to tell you about my secret plans about New Zealand. You are my rock, not my rocket."

There wasn't much else to say from my point of view. She wanted me to stay and talk for a while, but

I felt like I had to get out of there. I didn't stay mad at her long. She brought me a plate of cookies the next day and we ended up playing tennis. We stayed friends after all was said and done. I never tried to kiss her again.

I still have a few pictures of CJ in an old photo album. In one shot, she is carrying me piggyback. I am just about to fall off her back. She probably weighed all of 100 pounds. I had to weigh 170 pounds at least. She is wearing a dark plaid shirt. She is bent over because of the weight and her shoulder length bright blonde hair is framing her face. We are both laughing hard.

I have no idea who took the photograph. The date on the photo says January of 1972. This had to be five months before CJ left for New Zealand. I couldn't believe she was actually going. She talked about it for months, but I was sure she would change her mind. Thinking back on it, I don't know why I thought she would change her mind. She was always doing the unexpected.

She wanted to start a new life. She knew New Zealand was very green, they needed teachers, and all the men talked with a sexy accent. That was all she needed to know. She was finally getting over Dan at this point. It had been almost two years, but she was a slow healer.

I drove her to the airport. As we waited for her plane, she asked me a question that I had wondered about for three years. She asked me if I thought that she and I would have ended up together if we had met without Dan being around. That's the work she used: together. I didn't know what to say because I didn't know. I told her that next time she was picked up on Peachtree, she should jump in the back seat instead of the passenger side. If she had sat in my lap that first day, I might never have let her get out of the car. She started to cry, kissed me and got on the plane. I stayed at the airport until the plane took off. I thought she might get off at the last minute. She didn't.

I've lost touch with CJ over the years. A wife has trouble with a long-term correspondence with another woman. It's like you are keeping a farm system or something. But I got a card from CJ about five years after she left that makes me think that everything worked out well for her. The front of the post-card shows the greenest hillside overlooking an ocean. On the back she wrote:

"Sorry I haven't written in a while. I just had my second baby. Now I have one of each. As I look at these two I couldn't feel more happiness. At the same time, all the constant second-guessing I used to do about my life in the U.S. has gone away. I don't regret any of it anymore. When you have children, it's like God is giving you a chance to start over. I realize that if I had done any one thing different in my life up to this point, I wouldn't have come to New Zealand when I did, I would not have married who I did, and I would not have these two in my arms. And I can't imagine that."

BACKGROUND: In February 1986 Dr. Dean Jamsma, Associate Dean for International Programs, called me to his office and informed me that the Extension Training Specialist position for the Penn State/UNSAID Swaziland Cropping systems Research and Extension Training Project was vacant. In his next sentence, he asked me if I would be interested in the position and if Betty and I would want to move to Swaziland for two years. He asked me to think about it for a couple of weeks, talk it over with Betty and let him know what we decided. To make a long story short, Betty and I decided this position was made for me and it fit very nicely into my academic background, experience and international interests. We ultimately lived in the Kingdom of Swaziland for four years and four months. After traveling throughout all of Swaziland, meeting Swazi people at all economic and educational levels, working with the Swazi people, getting to know them on a personal level, sharing their joys and sorrows, watching their children grow, learning to appreciate the Swazi culture, attending weddings, funerals, and national celebrations, one became attached to a nation, its people and their culture that was different than mine. During our tenure in Swaziland, we had an extraordinary series of inspiring and monumental experiences. I hope and pray that in some small way we were able to help the Swazi people help themselves. To pull together my perceptions of the Swazi nation and its people, the following lines titled "A Kingdom of Peace" is an attempt to portray 53 months of memories brought to light with an earnest appreciation for this peaceful Kingdom.

A Kingdom of Peace

Swaziland, a nation of people, accustomed to peaceful, loving clans as parables declare, tranquil by nature, determined to endure, proud warriors of struggle, yet not too rapt to care.

*With rich traditional customs blending into space age tenets,
yet a people who cling to genuine politeness and profuse benevolence.*

*A Kingdom fathomed by its high to low veldt personality,
laden with purity, integrity, and morality,
from its manmade forests to enticing game parks,
a land little known where sing the larks.*

*Swaziland's high veldt, Piggs Peak,
majestically pushes through the cool morn's mist as masked weavers speak,
high above the heavenly valley,
a place to tarry and to dally.*

*Swaziland's middle veldt, Manzini,
immersed in communities not mini,
amongst hustle, bustle of urban intercourse, do handsome birds perch,
roosting aloft an emporium of shops, a place for bargains to search.*

*Swaziland's low veldt, Big Bend,
lazily clings to reddened haze at each day's end,
its gasping expanses dotted by cattle egrets that thirst for a spatter of rain,
satisfied only with a sparkling form the nucleus of miracles, irrigated water for its cane.*

*A Kingdom esteemed for its dignity,
garnished with Piggs Peak, Manzini and Big Bend clan nobility,
a Kingdom to dally along singing streams,
a heavenly place to promenade to seduce life's yearned for dreams.*

*A tranquil Kingdom that basks in its beauty,
yet if necessary, its proud warriors are ready to fulfill their duty,
yet realistically, a people of proverbial compatibility, harmony, and tranquility,
the Swazi people, a proud people of sovereignty.*

YOU'RE NOT MINE YET

*You're not mine
and I thought I'd let you go eventually
you know what they say;
absence makes the heart grow fonder or lonely
and somehow the two reactions took turns
turning my heart into two confused parts
and the part that is supposed to hate you
broke in two
...and the dominant factor chose you
that factor was the reason I liked you
so what do I do?*

*You're not mine
but the way you look at me says you are
and in my mind you have this gravitational pull
that draws the moth in me to your fire
everyone thinks you're not mine
but we know the truth
a small matter of time
will prove my thesis
and in our telepathy
we'll discuss the unspoken truth
about undercover lovers in their youth*

*You're not mine
but you know you always were
and when your eyes met mine
the universe shifted and the earth
gave birth to new excursions
on the verge of the sea
and through all the my-ster-ry
I found you, who in turn found me
And you found me in my valve chamber
Chained to the wall, bound by my feelings
I befriended you
And in turn
I felt the burn, of friendship
when lover's feelings weren't returned
the recurring feelings return
like history repeats itself
and the beat of your heart
gets louder and grows nearer*

*You're not mine, yet
but I'll bet
if I give little ignoring notions
then the potion
will take over in slow motions
and waves will send
a diffracting vibe
which emits intriguing hints
of how vibes
intertwine in your soul
and you'll be mine*

When I encounter difficult times I turn to nature. Exploring the outside world, I look for signs of hope and encouragement. On my walks, I pick up strange and unusual looking objects to use as totems for empowering my spirit. Often these finds help me change the course of my life. When I encountered the arrowhead, I had arrived at a crossroads in my life. I had to make a choice between staying on a familiar yet unsafe course or steering towards strange lands. The flint, however, was placed in my path at a moment when I struggled to make peace with myself.

Having spent the summer on the coast of Maine with my family, I took my two children for one last time to the ocean's edge to explore the tidal pools. Low tide made it possible to view ocean life from up close. At first, I thought what I lifted out of the crystal-clear and icy water was an unusual looking chip of stone. Closer inspection, however, revealed the shape of an arrow with sharp edges chiseled into the two sides. It was exquisite. My spiritual mind told me that it was placed in my path for a reason. For some time I had struggled with the decision to get out of my marriage and move on. After sixteen years of confinement in a loveless relationship, though, I needed courage to take the necessary steps for entering new territory. Upon my discovery of the stone point, I knew immediately that it would show me the way towards freedom. Reading its meaning, I understood that the arrow stands for showing me the way, and the sharp edges for a sharp mind, and a fighting spirit.

Two years ago I walked in an old cemetery in my hometown in Germany. At the time, I tried to find inner peace from upsetting memories of my past. My heritage had always been a burden, haunting me wherever I went. For me, my homeland and its people had much to be ashamed of. It was as if I was responsible for what happened in Germany's recent past. The cemetery made the past come alive: bombastic gravestones for fallen Nazi officers, mausoleums surrounded by heavy brick-walls for the aristocracy and tiny markers for children that had died from hunger or from fallen bombs. Ultimately, I became depressed at the sights, until my booted foot kicked against something hard on the sandy path. After much digging with my hands and a strong stick I lifted a flint out of the sand. As I pulled the rock from its prison of darkness, I pulled myself up and broke free from my own imprisonment. At that moment I came to realize that the past was done.

Today the arrowhead is hidden away in a velvet pouch, the flint rests on a bookshelf. I marvel at the craftsmanship of the arrowhead. I like to hold the flint in my hands. The smooth and shiny sides of the flint invite my touch. Arrowhead and flintstone served as powerful tools in liberating me from life's burdens. They will always be with me as reminders of my courage to overcome my dark past and move on into a bright future.

Orchard

*I remember the summer night's breeze
blowing through my Grandma's window,*

*hearing it intertwine with the chime
of the grandfather clock in the living room.*

*I would unconsciously dash to get my p.j.'s on,
knowing by instinct that it was eight.*

*I always got a running start,
and then leaped into her bed.*

She tucked me into those cloroxx bleached sheets.

*And I picked off the
little fuzz balls and rolled them
together into tiny strings.*

*I pulled the Irish colored flannel up close around my neck
and mummified myself in it.*

*She recited poems of birds and
undying love.*

*Once she finished, she'd kiss my forehead
and tell me how much she adored me.*

*I knew it too,
because she always slept upstairs
and allowed me to hog her entire bed;
a soap-scented, disinfected nest.*

*She'd say goodnight,
never forgetting to open the window,
leaving the breeze to creep in and crawl
into every corner of the room.*

*It brought apples, pears, and those tangy strawberries which
always seemed to lag behind.*

*I would inhale that breeze,
holding it in until my lungs hurt.
Then I would breathe out,
regretting it every time.*

True Love's Kiss

Mika Miller

All it takes is a kiss
And a heart to just this:
To love someone so strong
That there is no way
It could go wrong
So when you kiss
Please, I ask, know this
If it gets better every time
Then you found your love
For this is how I found mine
No matter if the kiss does grow
As long as you know
What you feel in your heart
Is what matters the most
That you and your love should never part
And if you do this
And you do miss
That wonderful kiss
Then, my friend, this
Is true love's kiss

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On the sea there will be
A song for you and me
Never knowing, always caring
Of the love from you to me
Will you be there on the morrow
I'll be weeping my dismal sorrow
Never to return
On a voyage to the heart
But stopping on the way to pass the days
We spent so far apart
I'll be waiting in despair
To see you like an angel
Sitting there
Waiting for the time we meet
For our due retreat
What about the time I watch you go
You walked away from me
And I didn't know
That you would not return
To see me grow
To live my life the way I did
Just like you wish I did
Never knew, always wondered
How it would be to finally see
My long gone brother
And yes Marc and me
Will finally be together for
Everyone to see

"Life's Journey"

*We each have our own path of life,
That we travel until we reach our eternal goal.
Eventually the path gets worn and the ground fades,
But we have to continue, no matter how far it goes.
There's no looking back or dreaming of the future,
We must live for today and keep forging ahead.
We always hope that maybe we'll find
A beautiful flower or animal just to change the pace.
No matter how long the path, there is always an end.
An end to monotony and end to trudging endlessly.
But once the path ends,
There's no turning back,
Then all you can do is look back and dream.*

"Why"

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*Why do you glare upon me?
Eyes of daggers,
Heart of hate,
Scorning at my every move,
Silent chills of emptiness,
Sour tongue of vengeance,
Why do you glare upon?*

*Does not my body flow with blood, as yours?
Does not my heart pain with sorrow, as yours?
Do I feel joy, as you do?
Yes, we all feel the same pain, sorrow and joy
But what I do not do is JUDGE YOU!
So why do you glare upon and judge me?*

Sylvia Thornton

MICHAEL JOACHIM
MetaphoricFusion

*Need to center a new thought
like stained glass and religion
sit on a church window frame
like, a meta-word, 'phor': to carry
A metaphor,
is an invitation, to go beyond or behind
ideas couple, like a rubber C-clamp*

*writer's paintbrush:
magician air
teacher's weapon
foreseeing
cognitively*

66 *weightless soil re-mountains under a mind-sweeper
an owl scrutinizes, owl Eyes movement in the distance
black circles of focus,
from a launchpad branch,
to a landing strip leaf,
Owl eyes swivel, not quite fearful,
But an uncommon sound has details to be clarified*

*Hold on this metaphor capture might escape
follow those eyes-*

*Compareabandon
Mergerreflection!
Writer's paintbrush, writes an idea with words
Magician air, targets the meandering concepts
Teacher's weapon, shows where to look for the meaning
A Poet searches*

*Pulls the launchpad from the branch, clears the landing strip leaf,
a new conceptual couple stays clamped
so quickly is their meaning and truth surveyed,
their arms may be still raised, like a suspect during strip searchLanded*

Grazing

Notice?

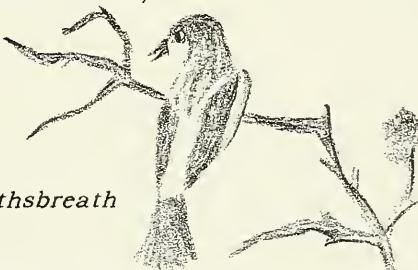
(below those words)

*owl's neck muscles, turning
crankshaft wordspulling
fused view, a new location*

*noun and verb make a substance
and a period, doesn't stop it from flowing*

(underneath words)

something crashes



someone pushes

*anxious deep breathsbreath
just enough time
just enough stillness and calm
clarity, releases
like an infant's decision*



Looking back over the past 10 years, I'm sometimes surprised how I got from soil judging and tractor driving to being a published writer. Actually, though, there's nothing surprising about it; in fact, it could happen to any of you! There are opportunities in publishing in every field, from traditional books and magazines to the vast world of on-line information sources, and you're in a perfect position to fill those jobs. If you're an English major, you can use your communication skills to share your knowledge about your favorite hobby or area of interest. If you're a science major, you have the technical knowledge; now sharpen up your writing skills and earn a living with that education you've worked so hard for!

Since graduating from Del Val in 1989 with a degree in Agronomy and Environmental Science, I've spent five years in working for a publisher and five working as a freelance writer and editor. My field of expertise is quite narrow-primarily garden book publishing-so my advice won't apply to all aspects of the publishing world. But I'd like to share some of my experience and suggestions with you, to make you aware of the possibilities out there and help you make the most of your post-college choices.

Adventures in Editing

58 If you are seriously interested in publishing as a career, I'd highly recommend spending at least a few years working for a publisher-and ideally more than one-so you can learn about as many aspects of the field as possible. Editing is a great place to start, because you can go on to specialize in one or more types of editing, or you can use your editorial skills to become a more effective writer.

A good editor does a service for both the readers, by making sure they are getting correct information, and the author, by presenting him in a polished, authoritative manner. When a book is published with incomprehensible information, typographical errors, and upside-down photographs (all of which happens depressingly often), novice readers get confused and discouraged, and knowledgeable readers lose respect for that author (even if some of the errors are due to poor editing).

I once heard a great comment: "Editing is like housekeeping-you only notice it when it's not done." It's generality right that the editor's work should be invisible, since her role is to help the author get across what he is trying to communicate. There are exceptions, of course. A few publishers, for instance, have a definite style: Pick up one of their books and you can guess who printed it just by reading a few paragraphs. But these aren't too common, because it takes editors with a great deal of knowledge and experience to add "house style" to a manuscript while not obliterating the author's voice or adding misinformation.

The down side of editing (if you're looking for fame and fortune, anyway) is that it's not the sort of career where you get a lot of recognition. People love to own books that are signed by the author, but you don't find people lining up to get an editor's signature! Editors rarely get their name on the cover of a book, either; they're lucky to get a mention in small print on the copyright page. As an editor, you may be given manuscript from so-called experts, or from first-time authors who somehow got their idea accepted, and you'll have to do your best to present them as articulate, well-informed

writers. Get used to seeing these authors go on to get future writing projects based on the strength of your work and get paid more than you will earn in a whole year. But if you're not looking for awards and attention-just the satisfaction of a job well done-then editing can be a very rewarding career.

Also, keep in mind that editing is an excellent way to learn how to be a better writer. The major job of an editor is to make sure information is presented in an organized and consistent manner. Once you've learned how to impose order and consistency on someone else's writing, you'll be much more aware of these issues when you write yourself!

Getting a Writing Career off the Ground

If you find the prospect of writing more appealing than editing, either as a career or as a sideline, you have several options. If you already have writing experience, magazine writing can be a good place to start. First, contact publications you find interesting and ask for their writers' guidelines. These guidelines will tell you if that publication accepts already-written articles or prefers to assign topics; provide details on how to prepare the manuscript for submission; and offer tips for writing at a level appropriate for their readers. From there, you can make contact with one of the editors, show them some writing samples, and hopefully get an assignment or an invitation to submit an article on the topic of your choosing.

What if you don't have any formal writing experience? First, get settled into some kind of paying job; you'll need to pay your bills while you work on your writing skills. Writing for small club or special-interest newsletters is one good way to gain experience and get your name in print. Newsletter editors are often desperate for material, and there's a good reason for that: They seldom pay for articles. (In fact, the editors themselves are quite often volunteers.) But if you're just getting started, you can't beat the opportunity to get your writing published and read by people who share your interests. If the readers like your style and appreciate the information you provide, they may let you or the editor know, and you may be asked to write more often. You'll have a great chance to polish your writing skills, develop a following of people who like your work, and have a portfolio of printed articles to show editors when you are looking for paying assignments. One word of warning, though: Make sure you have read several issues of whatever newsletter you're interested in before you submit your articles to them. Not all newsletter editors are trained editors--sometimes they're whichever club member got stuck with the job--and they may print anything and everything that comes their way. If a newsletter consistently publishes poorly written articles or contains many typographic errors, your work may not appear to advantage in that publication!

Taking the Step into Book Publishing

Once you're getting some recognition for smaller writing assignments, you might decide you'd like to write a book. This is not the time to lock yourself in a garret for months until you emerge with the manuscript for the "Great American Gardening Book""(or whatever topic you're interested in). The chances of getting a well-known publishing house to even read your completed manuscript, let alone publish it, are quite slim. Most editors prefer to work with an author from the very beginning, starting with the concept for the book. Good editors will know what other books on that topic are already on the market, and they can help you figure out a way to make your approach fresh and exciting. They'll probably then want to see an outline, and possibly a sample chapter or two, to make sure you're on

tract with your approach to covering the topic. They also will help you figure out things like how long the manuscript should be, and what kinds of illustrations and photographs might be necessary. There's no point in writing an 800-page manuscript if the publisher wants a 188-page book, or taking dozens of color photographs if the book will be published in black-and-white.

Let's say you were lucky enough to get your idea accepted. Depending on the publishing house you work with, you may be asked to write on a "work-for-hire" basis, which means you'll get paid a set or "flat" fee for the project (usually half before you start writing and half when you submit the manuscript and it is deemed acceptable by the editor). In other situations, you may get a project on a "royalty" basis. In this case, you will be paid a certain amount up front, as you would for work-for-hire projects: This is known as "an advance on royalties," or simply "an advance." (In gardening books, for example, a typical advance can range anywhere from \$5,000 to \$30,000.) Your contract will state what percentage of the book's sale price you will be entitled to: This is the "royalty." If the finished book sells for \$22, for example, and you are getting 5% royalties, you will earn approximately \$1 for each copy sold. (Different publishers figure royalty earnings differently: some base them on the cover price of the book, some on the net amount received by the publisher—the sale price minus the cost of production and marketing—but this is close enough for a simple example.)

First, the book needs to sell enough copies to cover the advance you received; then you start getting royalty payments. Based on the example above, if you received a \$20,000 advance, the publisher must sell 20,000 copies of the book to cover your advance. If they sell fewer copies, you won't get any money other than your advance. But if they sell 50,000 copies (which is possible for a good gardening book from a well-known publisher), you'll earn an additional \$30,000 without doing any more work. It's a gamble for both you and the publisher, but if the book sells well, you both win. And if it doesn't you at least have your advance payment—and your book!

70 If you're not yet up to writing a whole book yourself, contact publishers in your area of expertise and ask if they have opportunities for freelance writers to write parts of books. These sorts of projects are usually handled on a work-for-hire basis. They're a great way to get experience in book writing without the pressure of completing a whole manuscript.

A final note: Once you've had a book published, people will assume you are an expert in that subject, and you may be offered opportunities to lecture on your area of expertise. If you enjoy public speaking and frequent traveling, that can be a good thing; if not, it can be a horrifying prospect. When you write books on a royalty basis, lecturing to groups and appearing on radio and television are super opportunities to promote your book and sell more copies (so you'll earn more royalties). Nobody can force you to promote your book, but it's in your best interest to get over a fear of speaking to large audiences if you want to make more money. (Now, isn't that an incentive to put some effort into your required semester of public speaking?)

A Few Comments on Freelancing

If you've always dreamed of working for yourself, both writing and editing fit well into this lifestyle. When you're starting out, of course—and even once you're established—it can be a little frightening. Perhaps the scariest thing is the lack of a weekly paycheck. You'll need to get used to waiting weeks or months for payment after you submit your work. And if you're working on large projects, you may get payments only once or twice a year. Obviously, budgeting your money is a skill you'll have to develop quickly!

Because you won't have an employer withholding taxes from your paycheck, you'll need to learn the tax laws to find out how to plan your quarterly estimated tax payments. Freelancing generally has few expenses-pencils, paper, printer ink, postage, and a new computer every few years-so a good part of what looks like a great income will go toward tax payments. And don't forget health insurance, disability insurance, and all those other little expenses that can add up. On the other hand, thank of the money you'll save not contributing to office birthday parties or buying a stylish office wardrobe. Every day is casual day!

You'll need to learn how fast you can work, so you can estimate how long it will take you to complete a project. If you don't allow enough time, you may end up taking on more work than you can handle. For a while, you'll be overwhelmed with a backlog of work, but not for long; publishers will not be likely to hire you again if you're consistently late. You'll also need to figure out an hourly rate and a daily rate, as well as be able to figure out a per-project fee. When I started out as a freelancer, I kept careful track of how much time I spent on various types of work (writing, editing, photo selection, adapting British books to American English, and so on) and gradually developed a good idea of how long it would take to complete a project. Until you gain confidence in bidding on projects, it's easiest to accept whatever payment the publisher is offering. Once you're receiving multiple offers for work, you can choose the projects that most appeal to you and negotiate for a better payment than the standard rate.

Successful freelancing also takes a great deal of discipline in time management. It's so easy to get distracted from work, especially if it's a project you're not particularly interested in. You need to create a comfortable workspace that you enjoy being in, then remove anything that you find a serious distraction. If you like to be outside, for instance, it's a bad idea to place your desk next to a window. If you enjoy watching television, you don't want a TV in your work area. For me, it was a ban on all computer games. I found myself losing entire days playing games when I should have been writing!

You may be incredibly organized and focused on your work and still have time-management problems. Why? It's the "you're-at-home-so-you-obviously-have-time-to-talk attitude. Be prepared for friends, family, and/or former co-workers to call and talk for hours, stop by on their lunch hour, or send you interminable e-mails. They'll think you must be dying of loneliness and desperate to talk, go shopping, go out to lunch. You'll need to figure out ways to keep these interruptions from sucking up hours of work time. But on the other hand, you'll want to maintain some outside activities: both social and work-related. Get a pet, take a class, or go to a conference to maintain your enthusiasm and emotional well-being and keep up with the latest information in your area of interest.

Parting Thoughts

As a student at Del Val, you are in a superb position to prepare yourself for a career in either writing or editing. If you're an English or Communications major, consider a minor in Ornamental Horticulture, Equine Science, or some other area you find particularly interesting; you'll be in a perfect situation to work as either a writer or an editor in that area. If you're already a science major, you may find that your major courses aren't giving you much experience in writing. In that case, a minor in Communications can provide you with an excellent background for entering the "real world" as a technical editor or writer in your field. Take advantage of the opportunities you have now, and you'll be well on your way to a successful future!

I have an angel. She tells me what to say, what to do. No one can see my angel, not my friends, not even you.

My angel stands beside me. She helps me through thick and thin. My angel knows you more than I do; still you refuse to let her in.

My angel may be small, minute, but she has feelings too. Be careful what you might say to her. Be careful what you may do.

Why can't you believe in my angel? Why must you constantly push her aside? She has never done anything to hurt you. She has always been true and kind.

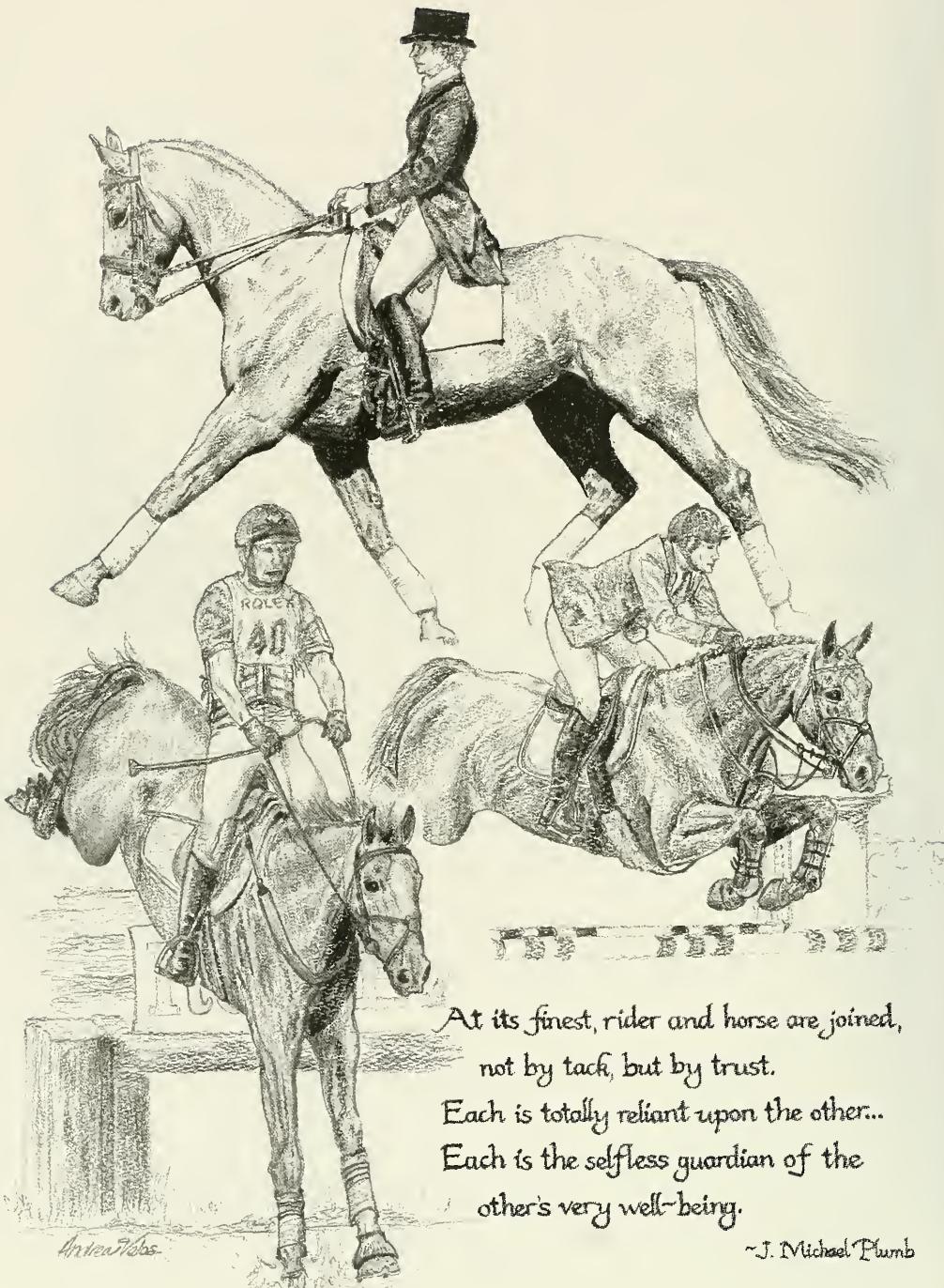
Every night I see my angel set and begin to weep. Every night it makes me cry. Why must you always hurt my angel? Inside it makes me want to die.

Why can't you understand that everyone's angel is different in his or her own way? Why can't you look past the differences in us, the many different arrays?

Why must everyone look the same in order for you to breed acceptance? Why can't someone be diversified and unique? If they were you would not respect them.

You see, my angel is different from you or I because she's very small. However, unlike you she will always be there for me, to just listen or even to talk.





At its finest, rider and horse are joined,
not by tack, but by trust.

Each is totally reliant upon the other...
Each is the selfless guardian of the
other's very well-being.

Artwork by

~J. Michael Plumb

THE GLEANER

High School Writing Competition

The English Department is very happy
to have sponsored its fourth
high school writing competition,
which was designed to showcase the
work of young writers in the area.

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We are amazed at the talent, sensitivity,
and ear for language in their
poetry and prose.

Our thanks and congratulations
go to them, their families, and,
of course, their English teachers!

L. M.

Shadowed Shelves

The wrinkle of agèd parchment whispers moldy melodies
The creasèd twist of vellum slices folds across the page
And gold-sheathed lines of secrets long past lost -
The close-held jealous mysteries of the convoluted sage.

A dark sleep whose rest disturbed rare and seldom,
Perhaps tentative premier venture of a child's chubby paw
Grubby fingers leaving paths clear for all to trace
Delicate scrip disappearing headlong through dwarf's maw.

Or yet, the reverent caress of the erudite hermit
Graceful furrowed digits dark ink-blotted,
A lover's intimate graze reserved for tomes alone
Keen; concerned only with puzzles spotted.

Shoved deep in dusty recesses, the book forever waits
Cobwebbed pages equal, the telling long since through
A respite 'till some brave soul, adventurous once more
And archaic words devoured, discovered all anew.

AMANDA BARRIE FIRESTONE

Upper Dublin High School

Grade 10

Ms. Mednitsky

An Unlikely Place

I stand and feel the cold air all around me
Naked winter branches hang
Like melted mahogany candle wax, dripping and suspended
Mother Nature is sleeping, Father Time has paused to catch his breath
I wonder at this as I feel only the beating of my heart
And my warm breath turning to fairy-dust jewels hitting the air

The sky, withered and gray, tattered with patches of cloud,
smiles eloquently down at me
Nature is in a trance, enraptured by its own curious radiance and grace
Everything like precious glass that I wait to crack if I move,
That the wind waits to weave through when it blows

Like a massive pillow, the snow suffocates the ground;
muffling the world's creaks and moans
But perhaps it alleviates trouble instead,
draws shaded suffering up into itself
saturated with the thick, wet greyness
A crystalline protector, both huge and microscopic

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A whisper of air whips past me; I swing my head to see it fly away
My heart follows the traveling, swirling gypsy.
whose tambourine is the rattling of hard, brown leaves

I turn, crossing the boundary between worlds
The magic is left behind.
As I close the door, I think that it was my own special universe
Once exited it ceases to exist; I am not there anymore
Much like the mystery of the refrigerator light
That turns off right when you close it,
impossible to see the light flicker off;
everyone tries it at some point in their lives

But I still feel the cold air clinging to my nose and fingers
And I smile to myself

LAUREN GALANTER
Harriton High School
Grade 12
Ms. Petersohn

I read what you wrote

I read what you wrote
and I weep
for I don't think I'll ever measure up.
I don't think I can express so genuinely
what you have
in such eloquent style.

All the songwriters, poets,
spill out onto the page
just what they feel
and somehow I understand.
But I don't think I know
what this is
that I feel,
so how do I put that in words?

You've conquered this
mountain of emotions,
I see,
but I'm still at some impassible ridge,
somewhere between the summit and the peak.
The road's closed behind me,
I can't go back.
When I look up,
you're still in the clouds.
How will I reach you with this frayed rope,
and this injured hand?

So, I think I'll just sit down for now,
try to collect my thoughts,
to let my wounds heal,
to fix these broken tools.
I have all the time in the world,
you say,
so I guess you'll just have patience,
and wait for these words to come.

CATHY BEAZER
Wissahickon High School
Grade 12
Ms. Diane Fimiano

From Death To Life

Informed of a friend terminally ill.
"Oh," a muttered word.
Silence.
A silence filled with thoughts.
Days pass by without a care.

Informed of a friend's death.
"Oh," a muttered word.
Silence.
A silence filled with thoughts.
Two days pass without a care.

An apprehensive drive in a
black dress.
A growing sense of sadness.
Closer. Closer.

Friendly faces, old pictures, memories.
Heartfelt hugs from family members.
Voices hushed.
Singing, murmuring, weeping.
A white tissue dabs the eyes.
A husky voice tells a humorous story.
Chuckles.
Sweat mixes with salty tears.
Silence.
A silence filled with thoughts.

I bite my tongue and cheek, trying not to sob.
I look at the ground so that I don't see others'
downcast faces.

I crack a smile at a funny memory, but easily slide back into a sad state.
If I feel this way, a mere friend or acquaintance.
How does the family feel?
Looking up, they are just as sad.
A great person no matter how well known will always be mourned.

Men carry a casket.
A body within, but not a soul.
The soul is in heaven, doing what it loves best.

A riderless horse follows the American Flag.
A grandson crouching with face in hands.
A crying heart, a tear falling to...

From dust you came, to dust you will return.
Forlorn looks of grief.
A subdued crowd breaks up.

Cold drinks, stories,
Life goes on.
A friend mourned but never forgotten.

Riding home.
Silence. Thinking.
He was such a great man. Everyone seemed to benefit knowing him.
If only I had known him better.
What if...
But no, he's gone.
Now I must live only in his memory.

On a farm filled with life.
New calves, new chicks, new kittens.
The miracle of life.
A cow giving birth.
Pure white hooves first.
Then wiggling tongue.
Straining. Pulling.
A body sprawled on the straw.
My dad smiles when he announces that it's a heifer.
We stand side by side looking on a mother and child.
A mother's loving tongue carefully cleaning.
Rough and gentle and thorough.
A first attempt to stand alone.
Collapse. Exhausted.
A mother's encouraging grunts.
The miracle of life.

Both are things of God.
Both equally amazing.

KATE HALDEMAN
Grade 9
Pennridge High School
Mr. Emerick

Frühling

Snow tipped, the forbidding and passionless peaks,
Looming on the gray horizon,
Stretch themselves around the seemingly endless flow of ice.
Oblivious to time, they stand powerful and strong;
Slow and majestic, yet regal and wise.
Spilling from their iron grip,
A river of frost dusted ice reaches for land.
That green and fir covered but somehow bleak shore -
So different from the immeasurable expanse of icy gray.
Glittering in their own pale light,
The imperious peaks flash like steel -
Cold, unfeeling, untouched by the rest of the world.
A single trilling shriek pierces the silence.
What being dares to show itself in this forsaken place?
A wing flutters; a shadow flits about on that barren ribbon of earth.
And then, another. Two more thrills fill the air.
One brave shadow abandons its shelter, soaring above the air,
As a tendril of gold escapes from the colorless sky.

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KRISTEN LIMBACH
Grade 9
Upper Dublin High School
Dr. Treat

A Comedy of Terrors

Madeline's blue eyes were bright with tears as she looked into Thornton's deep brown ones. Carefully, as though she was made from glass, he wrapped his strong, muscular arms around her slim shoulders. He nuzzled her long blonde hair gently and felt her tremble and shake with happiness. He thought how perfect their love was, how beautiful she was. Their love was like sugar: sweet.

I didn't know whether to laugh or vomit as I closed the romantic novel and put it back on the shelf. An evil thought formulated in my mind as I thought of Madeline and Thornton. What if I write a whole new story about them? Not a long one, but one that was...realistic.

That night I sat down at my typewriter. For a while, I brooded. My glimpses of Madeline and Thornton had been brief, thankfully, but I needed to develop what I knew. Inspiration was not long coming. Eventually, I came up with this:

Continues on next page

The hill was covered in grass, each blade a perfect clone of the one beside it. Flowers strategically grew here and there, as did the perfectly conical firs. The birds tweeted merrily, as birds are wont to do when the sun is shining cheerfully and the sky is as blue as a periwinkle.

Madeline had no clue why she was on a Disneyesque hill, but she didn't care. She also had no clue why Thornton, the love of her life, was also on the hill, a little further down; she accepted it as one of those joyful coincidences of life. *How like him!* thought Madeline. She ran down the hill to greet him. Her long blonde hair flew out behind her like a pennant. Her bright blue eyes shone as she approached him. Each slim, perfectly shaped, creamy leg pumped to carry Madeline's slim, perfectly shaped, creamy body down the hill. Her pink summer dress swished around her knees as she descended. "Thornton!" she cried in a voice like a silver bell. "Thornton!" The man turned around, and Madeline's heart flipped at the sight of him. He was tall and bronzed and muscular. His eyes were deep brown like the swamp at dusk, and his chin could rival that of Batman. Spreading her arms out, she leaped toward him.

Thornton saw her coming, arms outstretched and pelting full speed down the hill. "Madeline!" he yelled. Realizing he could not stop her impetuous loving rush, he dodged out of the way. Madeline, under the forces of physics, ran right by him. Momentum carried her forward. "Help!" she screamed as she tried to stop herself running down the hill. "I can't stop!" Thornton watched her mad descent from his elevated position. He shook his angular head as Madeline zoomed down the hill. Wincing, he watched her crash into a bush. *At least that stopped her*, he thought.

Turning his body sideways so that he didn't pull a Madeline, Thornton hurried down the hill. Madeline was desperately trying to pull herself out of the nasty, prickly gorse bush. The pale yellow flowers exuded a delicate, waxy scent of coconut and vanilla. It was a shame that Madeline was crushing them. Her long blonde hair was caught fast by the branches; the more she struggled, the more entangled she became. "Thornton! Help me," she pleaded when she noticed his presence.

"Madeline," said Thornton as he carefully began to disentangle the silky yellow strands, "that was really stupid. I can't believe you ran down a hill at top speed."

"Oh, Thornton, I was about to leap into your arms. Why did you move?"

"Because I didn't want to end up in the gorse bush like you. Hold still. There, you're free." Grabbing her arms, he pulled her to her feet.

"Thank you!" exclaimed Madeline. She threw her arms around him and hugged him tightly. Thornton put his arms around her, and his fingers brushed against her hair. Instantly, he uttered an expletive and let her go. He carefully extracted a prickly thorn branch from the golden tresses and tossed it aside.

Madeline flung her arms around him once more. "Oh, Thornton, I love you!" she cried. Again, she was pushed away. "Don't yell in my ear like that," he replied.

Third time lucky; Madeline wrapped her arms around Thornton and hugged him. Looking bored, he put his arms around her. "I love you," she whispered sweetly and tenderly.

"I'm hungry," moaned Thornton. "Is there anything to eat?"

Madeline was almost crushed, but Thornton could say anything to her and she would still love him. It was her fate, her destiny to love Thornton; it was written in the stars. Talking of stars, Madeline noticed that it was becoming dark. "It's becoming dark," she pointed out.

Thornton gazed around him. In the gathering dusk, the hill looked less Disney and more Wes Craven. He looked down the hill and pointed at the amorphous blob at the bottom. "We'll cut through the woods to get home," he decided.

It was darker in the woods, for the canopy of foliage blocked out the remaining light. Thornton, who had rather bad eyesight, kept walking into the trees. Madeline tried to chatter merrily, but eventually fell silent.

Then it started.

Madeline heard it first: a swift rustling, then silence. The birds quieted and the insects halted their chirping. Again, rustling and silence. Nervously, Madeline grabbed Thornton's hand. "Thornton! Did you hear that?"

"@#\$% trees. Hear what?"

"That - that noise."

"What noise?" The two stood and listened. Rustle. Silence.

"That noise," whispered Madeline.

"It was the wind," replied the man, moving his tall, muscular body through the trees and stumbling on a root.

"I'm afraid," whispered Madeline.

"Don't worry, I'll protect us both, replied Thornton.

Unfortunately, there was nothing even Thornton could do to save himself or Madeline. Although he tried to ram the werewolf away using his perfectly square Batman chin, the werewolf had him for dinner and the screaming Madeline for dessert.

SUZANNE WARDLE
Palisades High School
Grade 11
Ms. Joanna Hotmeier

Blue Eyes

I stared into his shimmering blue eyes, so deep that I could not quite see the bottom. As I looked into him, I could see my own reflection looking back out at me. I leaned in to get closer, and dipped my hand in at the edge of the cool blue to check the temperature. The cool water surrounded the tips of my fingers and the coldness soothed the warmth inside of me. He reached out to me, trying to pull me into him. I dove right in the quiet lake. My hands parted the cool blue water and then my body slid in after them.

I floated, suspended in the cool translucent blue that was him. I was completely weightless and serene. Everything was calm and quiet, all I could hear was the beating of my heart pounding in my ears. Tiny bubbles tickled my body as I hung there, content and relaxed.

As I swam up, trying to make my way to the surface to take a breath, I felt him crawl up and wrap himself around my legs. He tried to pull me back down to keep me from leaving him. I thrashed around, my arms flailing, as I attempted to slip out of his hands. My lungs were craving air and they felt as if they were about to burst. Finally I escaped his grasp and broke the surface. A fat wet drop of salinated water rolled out of his eye, with me inside, and traveled down his cheek. I was free.

KERRY POTTER MCCORMICK

Wissahickon High School

Grade 12

Ms. Barbara Speece

POSH: Push Over Senior High

Sweet, shy Suzie woke up to the incessant ringing of the telephone next to her bed. It seemed as if she couldn't take a fifteen-minute nap without someone calling to talk to her. Because she was so intelligent and had that timid manner about her, naturally she was the most popular girl in school. She was only a sophomore at Push Over Senior High, but already even the senior girls envied her popularity. Of course these girls were up front about their feelings, which they knew were immoral to have, and they never even thought about going behind Suzie's back in any underhanded manner. None of these girls would slander Suzie in order to selfishly raise her own social status. Absolutely no one ever even thought about spreading a demeaning rumor about her.

All of the gentlemen in the school craved Suzie for her deep intellect. Her thick glasses and striped sweaters accentuate her glowing inner beauty. She was simply irresistible. Despite Suzie's much aggrandized popularity, she meekly said hello to every guy who walked down the hallway checking out her new frames. Her cheeks would blush as one of the gentlemen would pull out a chair for her at lunch.

In the dining hall itself, there were long, heavy, oak tables with comfortable, plush chairs. The arching backs of the chair were ornately decorated with detailed carvings. The school had the fiscal ability to finance this hall from the money they had saved by not rebuilding the crumbling football stadium. Luckily, the school board had set their priorities on student comfort and had approved all of the right measures that were to the benefit of the students and faculty. Of course, that was a basic standard in the Push Over area. All of the POSH parents and taxpayers routinely made their way out to vote for their representatives, and no one was concerned by a slight rise in their property taxes. Obviously, the high quality schools of the area were what kept the property value up to begin with, and all of the residents realized that they had to invest in their community's educational facilities.

Anyhow, there was no real room for envy or jealousy in a school where everyone got along and there existed no real social barriers. Although the jocks were generally at the bottom of the social ladder, everyone regarded one another as equals. Naturally, the term "jock" wasn't used within the POSH area, but the athletes of the school often found it difficult to maintain a 4.0 grade point average. If a student couldn't maintain straight A's in track two classes, then it was difficult to become popular. Not only was each student considerate of his fellow students, but also teachers and students regarded one another with mutual respect, which provided the ideal atmosphere in which to learn. Never at POSH would one see a student arguing over a marginal grade or questioning the teacher's authority.

Individuality among the POSH student body was widely encouraged. No one ever had to feel pressure to fit in. Superficial people were respectfully scorned. Everyone had his own identity and it was virtually impossible to pin a social tag on any student or group. Why would anyone want to stereotype others to begin with? The students were secure enough in their own identities that they didn't need to show condescension towards anyone else.

In the POSH area, weekends were spent enjoying the simple pleasures of life. Drugs and alcohol were nonexistent across most of POSH, and everyone preferred it that way. Anyone who used these substances was immediately cast out by his peers, and then given a chance to explain his personal, immoral choices. The only way to climb the Push Over social ladder was to work hard and earn good grades. Drinking and smoking just made that ladder harder to climb. Athletes were also forced to skip practices often in order to study for a few extra hours. The coaches understood the necessity of academics and encouraged the team members to take time off whenever they needed it. Otherwise, it was seemingly impossible for an athlete to handle the workload successfully or to climb the social ladder.

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Last year's biggest event was the school-wide pep rally before the State Chess Meet. The captain, known to most of the students simply as the biggest hunk in school, gave a vibrant speech. As he recounted last year's victory, the students looked on in awe and burst into applause as he concluded with, "Veni, Vidi, Vici!" After the rally was concluded, each student meticulously cleaned the large chess room, so as to lighten the task for the masters of the custodial arts. Each student made sure to thank the custodians in order to show their utmost respect for them. Students were always careful to treat every member of the district with equal respect. In the dining halls, the students left their tables spotless and always cleaned up after themselves, and all the students were polite and friendly with the secretaries and other staff members in the building.

After the chess meet, the display board on the street was lit up with many superlatives describing each member of the winning chess team. "Sophisticated Suzie" was illuminated for the entire community to see. One day the football team hoped to see their names posted on that board, but everyone knew that was utterly absurd.

Continues on next page

As Suzie reached over to skim through the *Push Over Daily Paper*, the Top SAT Scores section fell onto her bed. Atop the list of this week's top scorers was Suzie Klug. She scanned the page and found a headline that read: *Suzie Klug Comes on Strong in the Verbal Section*. She was ecstatic to see her name in print, although she was a little tired of reading about herself. As she reclined to peruse her fellow students' scores, she drifted off into thought and said softly, "I wonder how the football team did?"

TREVOR STUTZ

Upper Dublin High School

Grade 11

Dr. Sharon Traver

S.W. AND THE SEVEN GEEKS

Some time ago, in the sunny suburb of Burbank, California, there lived a CEO named Joe White and his daughter. The CEO was a self-made man who started his company, White Industries, from scratch and was proud of what it had become. Joe's only child was a daughter whose name was Snow, so named because of her almost white, sun-bleached blonde hair. Snow was also a brilliant person who graduated first in her class in computer Sciences at Cal Tech. Joe was so proud of his wonderful daughter, Snow. In the years since her mother had died, the two had grown closer and closer.

Snow worked for her father at White Industries, and with her knowledge and great work ethic she quickly rose in the ranks of the corporation. Snow rose to the point of being the next CEO for the company after her father stepped down. Things had been going well for Snow and her father until one day Mr. White announced that he was to wed Alexa Maleficent, a CEO of a rival company. Snow knew that Alexa was out for more than just a relationship. She realized that if her father married Alexa, then she would attempt to become the next CEO of White Industries.

One day Alexa was on the phone with her executive advisor.

"Jim, Jim on the phone. Who will be the next White CEO?"

The advisor replied, "Although you are capable, and your skills are fine, I'm afraid S.W. is the next in line."

Alexa could not stand the news and immediately set a plan in motion to kill S.W. Alexa handed S.W. a one way plane ticket to New York City and told her that her father was sending her to an important business meeting. As part of Alexa's evil plan, the man at the "meeting" was supposed to kill S.W. when she arrived. However, when she got there he dis-

covered that he had known her since she was a child and could not kill her. Instead he gave her \$500 and sent her off, alone, in NYC, and he told her if she were to stay alive she should not return to L.A. for Alexa would try to kill her again.

Snow wandered for a day through the unfamiliar streets of New York City. She finally ended up in the Village outside of a small building with a sign that said "Help Wanted" in the window. The building was home to a start up internet company called VerticalUnLimited.com.

VU Ltd. was staffed by a small close-knit group of seven guys who were buddies from their college days at MIT. These men were known as: Nerdy, Tecky, Dorky, Goofy, Brainy, Snorty and Doc, so called for his Ph.D. in IT. S.W. got the job with VerticalUnLimited.com and astounded the company with her skills as a manager. Soon, with S.W. at the helm, VU Ltd. had gone public with a record breaking IPO on Wall Street. VerticalUnLimited.com was the best thing since sliced bread!

Meanwhile back in California, Joe, terribly distraught from the "death" of his daughter was nearly ready to hand over control of White Industries to the power-hungry Alexa. She was feeling very confident and was talking to her man on Wall Street.

"Fred, Fred on the Street, which is the company that can't be beat?"

"Although your company seems the best, S.W.'s VULtd.com is better than the rest."

Alexa flew into a rage! How could S.W. still be alive? And making a fortune! She immediately knew what she would do. Alexa called upon some of hew news sources and "leaked" information that VerticalUnLimited.com had been selling Internet Domains to Iraqi Terrorists. With the terrorist rumors flying, people couldn't get far enough away from VerticalUnLimited.com. It appeared that they would have to close their doors forever.

Snow came wearily into the office to find out that the seven geeks had been busy trying to find a solution to their troubles. Sitting in front of S.W.'s giant oak desk was a man named Bill. Bill proposed a merger between his company and VULtd.com. Bill's company was massive and had the money and media power to clear up the ugly rumors about S.W.'s company. Snow immediately agreed and as she leaned to sign the papers, Bill said,

"Thank you, and welcome to the Microsoft Family."

Snow instantly fell for the intelligent businessman, with his geeky charm and nerdy good looks, who saved her from bankruptcy. His billions of dollars weren't too hard to accept either. The companies' merger was immensely successful, the rumors were cleared and S.W. and Bill were married and lived happily ever after.

The End

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Vision in the Snow

She runs frantically outside to escape the tangle of darkness, heat, confusion and loneliness that's haunted her. She seeks refuge in the bright morning light, cold that contracts her skin, and snow that falls like fairydust and disappears magically upon her bare arms. Her eyes burn and her body sweats, but she feels the chill down to her core. Dark hair forms a tangle about her pale face, catching crystals of white in its web. Her hazel eyes are glassed over as she stumbles and narrowly misses oblivion on the icy steps to the park.

She trudges through the unbroken snow, watching flakes drifting down from the steely grey heavens. Her slippers fill with slush, which melts and soon numbs her feet entirely, but she presses on. A man passes who carefully doesn't look at her.

The world suddenly dims, and there's a roaring in her ears. She sways, takes a step sideways to catch her balance, and stands for a minute breathing hard. It's cold, but she can't stop sweating, and the world is moving about her as she stands stock still. She wishes it would stop so she could catch up, but it feels like she's in slow motion while the snow falls around her.

She closes her eyes, and a feeling of peace comes over her. Mere moments ago it had seemed that she was entirely alone in this world of cold and white. But now she feels that she's been wrong in this assumption, for there's something else here. There's a presence moving over the world with a slow sureness that's eerily ubiquitous, frightening because she's never noticed it before, yet it's been there for as long as she or anyone else can remember. All in a moment, as sudden as an epiphany, she knows that this is what she was looking for. This presence wraps around her, holds and cradles her, whispers through the snow and trees and tells her that there's no need to be afraid, or even to speak. Everything is forgiven before it's asked.

She opens her eyes. The trees bend their branches to the ground confidentially, and everything is covered in white, purified and made new again. She wonders if it could do the same for her, and suddenly her heart is hopeful. She looks around in awe, and catches sight of a large forsythia bush lying dormant under a blanket of snow. It seems comforting, warm, protective, and so she crawls under it on her hands and knees.

The ground is bare and frozen, and twigs stick in her hair and poke at her face, but she curls up and makes herself reasonable comfortable. Light filters through, cool and blue, and she feels like she's been transported to another world that's safe and isolate, where time doesn't exist.

She sees herself whirling in a separate darkness, a glowing form dancing a rapid, furious dance that's overtaken her. She's spinning the darkness around her, and it swirls and eddies where her body passes. She grabs it and weaves it with her hands, in patterns that are beautiful and illusive but devoid of light. She's consuming the shadows, spinning them into her like fiber. Her form begins to dull around the edges, and then fade until after a time it becomes unclear, like a trick of the eyes, whether it's she consuming the darkness or it consuming her.

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*Dedicated to the memory of
Jodi Paterno*